

# A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

BY  
ROLVIX HARLAN, PH.D.



COKESBURY PRESS  
IMPORTERS :: PUBLISHERS  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

1925



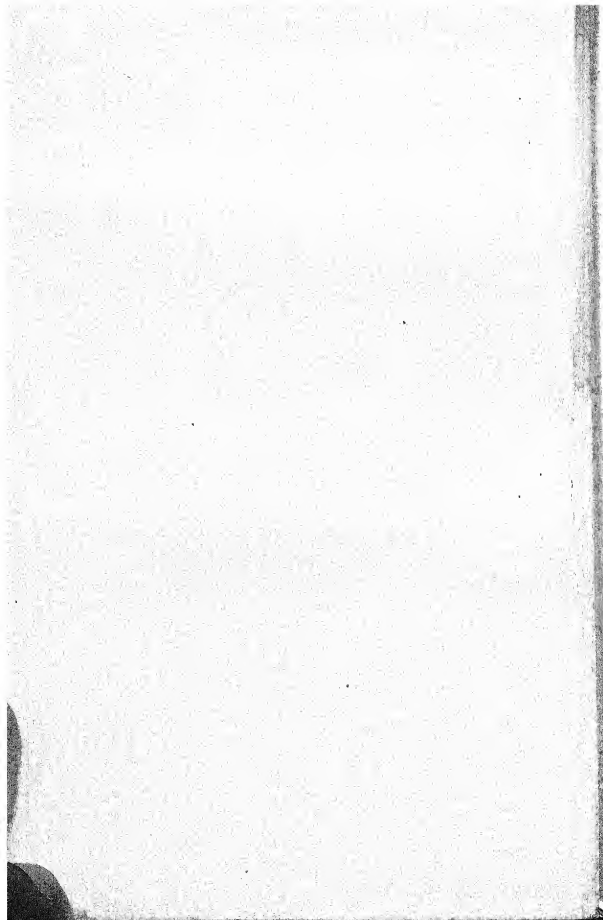
Copyright, 1925, by  
**LAMAR & BARTON**

*Printed in the United States of America*

**DEDICATED**

*To the Men I have met in the Pastors' Schools  
in recognition of the fine spirit  
in which they do their work*





## PREFACE

THIS little book is in part the result of experiences as a Pastor of Town and Country Churches. A sense of failure, as a young pastor, to lead the Churches to do all that they might have done, more than any sense of success with these Churches, has led to this writing. If I were again a pastor of a country church, I would honestly try to realize as many of the ideas, plans, and suggestions herein as were found practicable on that particular field.

Experience in coöperating with Country Churches as a Secretary of Social Service and Rural Community Work with a Home Mission Society, and studies made while Professor of Sociology in a College in a distinctly agricultural State, have given opportunity for wider acquaintance with the Country Life Movement and the Country Church.

While teaching in Institutes and Schools for Pastors, the need of a manual to cover a short and intensive course became very apparent. This book seeks to meet that need, but it also includes materials intended to awaken interest in the Country Church on the part of the general reader and student.

It is my hope that the note of pessimism so often heard in connection with this subject of Country Life and the Country Church, the "sob-stuff" of newspaper and address, may give place to a new note of optimism and a social faith in meliorism. The Country Church

is going to share in social progress. Better, the Country Church will continue to contribute to social progress.

Some pastors may complain that to put into actual practice all the suggestions herein contained is impossible. Granted! But one thing is certain: The members of a Country Church can be led into very many more activities in the name of the Church than is usual—activities which take the place of those they are certain to engage in under other auspices, often less worthy. No church or community is so satisfying to those connected with it as one which fairly exhausts the people's possible time and energies in satisfying tasks.

Let pastors keep the church busy, and many problems, moral and spiritual, will not need to be solved—they will be left behind.

I am indebted for suggestions and materials to many men who came earlier, and who have worked longer or more exclusively, in this field of interest. Such personal associations as I have had with men like Dr. Warren H. Wilson, Dr. E. de S. Brunner, Dr. H. N. Morse, and more recently with Rev. R. H. Ruff, of the Board of Missions of the M. E. Church, South, have served to stimulate and intensify my interest in the Country Church.

I have tried to keep acquaintance with the literature in the field and rejoice at every evidence of growing scientific interest in the social and religious aspects of the Country Life Movement.

UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND, VA.,

New Year's Day, 1925.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER I	
	PAGE
A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II	
A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH ( <i>Continued</i> ) . . . .	10
CHAPTER III	
THE MINISTER OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH . . . . .	23
CHAPTER IV	
THE MINISTER OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH ( <i>Continued</i> ) . . .	40
CHAPTER V	
EVANGELISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH . . . . .	49
CHAPTER VI	
EVANGELISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH ( <i>Continued</i> ) . . .	60
CHAPTER VII	
OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH . . .	76
CHAPTER VIII	
OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH ( <i>Continued</i> ) . . . . .	88
CHAPTER IX	
ADMINISTRATION, ORGANIZATION, AND FINANCE OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH . . . . .	109
CHAPTER X	
THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND WORLD PROBLEMS . . . . .	127

## CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XI

	PAGE
THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP . . .	140

## CHAPTER XII

THE APPROACH TO THE COUNTRY LIFE PROBLEM (with brief bibliography) . . . . .	153
---	-----

# A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

---

## CHAPTER I

### A NEW DAY FOR THE RURAL CHURCH

"And it was evening, and it was morning—day one."

—*First Chapter of Genesis.*

"Until the day break and the shadows flee away."

—*Song of Solomon.*

THIS title sounds a note of hopefulness in a situation which for the most part has been regarded as distressingly discouraging. Like the city slum, and the downtown sections of the big cities, the Country Church is regarded by many as a well-nigh lost home mission field. It is a problem of social conditions, economic change, and readjustment, but it is principally a problem of a lopsided Christianity and a narrow-visioned ecclesiastical policy. In so far as the plight of the Country Church is the result of short-sighted, inadequate leadership, program, and methods, it can measurably be corrected. Christianity has recovered itself in numerous situations in the course of Church history. It must now set itself the task of recovering and rehabilitating itself in rural America.

There is no reason to be hopeless and pessimistic concerning the Country Church. *Wherever people make their living, rear families, and live out their lives Christianity, properly interpreted and administered by a serving church, has been and will be a vital factor and a saving force.* People do live in the country, in hamlets and villages; they till the soil and produce food and raw materials for industry, and hence to these people the Country Church must deliver the message of Christianity, and for and with them perform its constructive ministry. People make their living and live their life on the land, and the Church must be there with them, performing its blessed function and realizing its beneficent objectives.

What really are the functions of a Country Church—of any church in the life of a people? The functions of a normal church in the life of a community are at least five: \*

1. *It is the organ of their common worship.* No definition of the concept worship could be complete without the idea involved in the word "common"—or community of worship. Worship to be complete requires comradeship, togetherness, a sharing and expressing together of "like precious faith." It is well enough to talk about an isolated individual sitting alone in his home or roaming the fields and woodlands and worshiping thus, but any fairly complete insight into human nature reveals the fact that the finest appreciations, inspirations, and helps of life are found in the social context—in the sense that they are mediated to us in the interplay of personality on personality. "The

\* Suggested by William Adams Brown in "The Religion of Democracy."

"Book of Common Prayer" presents an idea bottomed on eternal reality. The individual has no support for faith in a living God in a changing world, save in the witness God has given of Himself in our common humanity.

If the church—the collective religious expression of a people's aspirations—were abolished in any area of the world, it would be restored and rebuilt or civilization and human progress would perish. The church is not a luxury of civilization—it is a necessity in the expanding moral and spiritual horizon of humanity. The only question to be really faced is: Is the Church as it now exists and seeks to function livingly geared into the total life of the people? Is it adjusted to their economic, intellectual, and moral life?

We are bound to confess that in many local situations in the country the church is belated, is badly led, is giving opportunity for the expression of certain lower elements of human nature; but we at once affirm that this need not be so, and, please God, we are in the process of finding ways by which the Country Church may grip the inner, deeper, profounder phases of human nature and through its worship, led by a godly minister and helpers, bind the hearts of the people back to God. The church has been—imperfectly to be sure—the organ of the people's common worship in the country. It is that now in multitudes of places. It is bent on ascertaining how more perfectly to be that organ of the life of man expressed in company with others, which gives recognition to ideals, to truth, to duty, to beauty—to God.

Worship is made up of praise which is *good opinion vocally expressed*. How needful it is to praise Him



who is higher, holier, and more loving than we. How satisfying it is to sing our praise and thus express our high opinion together of the God of the fields and flowers, the harvest, the home; of life here and hereafter; and mingle our voices in mutually confirming faith thus expressed. Analyze a single rural hymn, "The Church in the Wildwood." What potent memories are awakened! What eternal hopes spring anew in the heart as the thrill and throb of the hopes of the multitudes of others play over our life when we sing this song together! It is the *church* in the wildwood—mother's church, neighbors' church, the community's church, where we were put in possession of our share of God. Take our great rural national hymn, "America." It begins with "My country, 'tis of thee," but proceeds to the socialized conception, "Our fathers' God, to Thee," "Great God, our King."

It is to be deplored that the Country Church has not always been able to bring together all the people of the countryside and bind their hearts together and lift them up to God in hymns of praise.

Worship is made up of prayer: "Our Father who art in heaven. . . . Give *us* this day *our* daily bread. . . . Forgive *us our* trespasses, as we forgive. . . . Lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us*."

Yes, we need the church as the organ of our common worship. No institution or activity can permanently set the church aside or take the place it fills in normal, growing, happy human life. Our task is to have the church of the country consider all related conditions and interests and give guidance to the church that it may function properly in worship.

2. *The church is the school in which the people are*

*instructed in the meaning of their religion.* In the early centuries of Christianity the Epistles of the New Testament, the Didaché or the Teachings of the Twelve, and the lessons of the Catechuminate were used to inform and instruct the new convert in the elements of his religion—its bearing on thought, life, and conduct.

In the pioneer days of American Christianity, the pulpit and Bible-reading at family altars (an institution which the church greatly encouraged) were practically the only methods of instructing the people. In Country Churches the sermons were long and full of Scripture. We sometimes wonder if we could endure such methods of indoctrinization now. Perhaps we would not; but it is a fact that a great many church leaders and workers in town and city churches spend as many or more hours in the various meetings and activities of the church—Sunday school, morning worship, young people's organizations—as our fathers spent in hearing sermons or in Bible-readings.

The defect of the early Country Church on the side of constructive effort was its failure to put habit on the side of Christian faith and practice, by arranging for careful instruction of the young. In the liturgical churches—*e. g.*, the Lutheran Church—this defect was never so marked, and before Sunday schools and organized classes came into being, the pastor's confirmation class or training class prepared the youth for intelligent entrance upon the fuller opportunities and duties of their religion. It is to be noted that the Country Churches of the Lutheran and other liturgical denominations, which have taken care to instruct the young, have not as a rule gone into a state of decline.

The Country Church through lack of equipment, un-

trained leadership, and inadequate financial resources has slumped and fallen far behind in many places because the people have not been properly instructed in the meaning of their religion. A new day is dawning, however, and Sunday school, organized class, trained teachers, and sound pedagogical methods are rapidly replacing the *laissez faire* practice of the old-time Country Church of all denominations.

3. *In the life of the people the church is the instrument of their moral discipline.* Through the Christian centuries, the Church has called men to repentance and has voiced the claims of God on conscience and life. Matured men have winced at the disapproval and censure of the Church, and in penance have sought amendment of life to confirm to the will of the Church. In certain periods the fear of excommunication, with its consequent social ostracism and shutting away from cherished privileges, has acted as a deterrent to hold men back from anti-social conduct or has brought them back in contrition for some socially hurtful wrongdoing.

Protestantism and the Evangelical faith have not proceeded as a rule on the basis of securing moral discipline through fear of excommunication. Larger freedom has brought needed change in method. Bishops and pastors cannot do in our free democratic communities what Calvin sought to do in Geneva, as he compelled church attendance and enforced certain standards of morals on the ungodly and rebellious. Nevertheless, Evangelical Churches have disciplined the morals of our communities and have often been a vitalizing conscience for approved high types of conduct.

It is at this point perhaps that the Country Church is in greatest difficulty and its influence languishes.

Not that the Country Church has not been and is still a strong moral force. It could be said that the prohibition movement is an achievement of the Country Churches of America. The church has helped shape and direct public opinion. It has banished drunkenness from its membership and is well on the way toward making a sober nation—not by excommunication, but by quickening the public conscience.

Many local churches in the country have through fear or truculence on the part of their leadership become divided in moral sentiment and have tolerated many forms of iniquity on the part of members which have been a reproach and a weakness to the Church. Many over-zealous ministers, with too narrow sympathies and appreciation of how normal life is lived, have raised false issues with young people and have failed to discipline properly the recreational and play life, and have lost the loyalty and sympathy of many high-minded people.

Yet the Church can never cease to be a challenge to wickedness in the community, and a disciplinarian of the life of its own people by teaching standards of life and conduct which are noble and worthy. To be "wise as serpents, and harmless as doves," is the need. In fact, as wise as seven serpents, and to think of the dove as a belligerent species, has often been the need of the country minister and church in some morally complicated situation.

4, *The Church is the agency through which the people combine for common service.* It would seem that in our emphasis on preaching as a "service" and singing and prayer as "services," we have lost the art of real service in the Country Church. "Behold how

these Christians love one another" was the observation of early opponents to the spread of the new religion of Christianity. The Church had no better apologetic than the good it was doing to all men, especially to those of the household of faith. Caring for the sick and needy, various philanthropies and charities, gave outlet to the wonderful dynamic released by the spirit of Christ in the Church.

In the pioneer days of rural America practically all neighborly service was the by-product of the teaching of the Church, and even to-day in surveys of community activities in all parts of the country it has been revealed that seventy-five per cent of all those who serve on committees and commissions doing public service without remuneration are members of Evangelical Churches. But we will discuss this more at length in the chapter dealing with the program of the Country Church, and will set forth its principle and practice in discussing the minister of the Country Church.

A Roman Catholic priest of the open country, catching the spirit of the new day in rural America and sensing the need for sound principles of procedure in making the Church effective, said that there are three things which he stresses: "recreation, coöperation, and catechetical instruction." Ah, there you have it! A hand on the young people to help and guide, public welfare through working together, and knowledge of the implications of our faith. The Church is our agency through which we combine for common service.

5. *The Church is the means through which the tenets of our religion are propagated.* This means Evangelism and Missions. These two which God has joined together should never be put asunder. The

Country Church in America inherited a tradition of Evangelism from the early itinerant preachers of Methodism and the aggressive propaganda of the Baptists. Its early development followed upon the wonderful influence of the Evangelical Revival and the rise of modern missions. The Church in America was born in a revival and was early taught to help send the Gospel to the "uttermost part."

In the story of the leavening of the nation, which is one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of Christianity, we see the Churches of the Eastern seaboard sending out new members and evangelistic preachers to carry the gospel to the regions beyond. There was a prophetic dread on the part of our early American Church fathers of having a godless civilization planted west of the Alleghanies. Home Missions was the answer. And America is so largely Christian because these early Country Churches had religion to spare. The urge in the heart of a genuine disciple of Christ finds outlet and opportunity for expression in seeking the lost and in combining to bring the gospel to those who know not Christ.

This spirit of Evangelism often found vent in high emotionalism, and sometimes under the insistence of an untrained but powerful leadership, overemphasized a single type of experience. The new day for the Country Church is dawning because sound principles of evangelism and truly scientific missions are utilizing this fine fervor and feeling, generated by the love of Christ in the hearts of believers.

## CHAPTER II

### A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH (*Continued*)

WHAT, briefly, has been the history of the Church in rural America?

The story is one of lights and shades, of achievements and defeats. Our discussion of the present plight of the Country Church will reproduce in broad outline the generalizations which some of those most thoroughly acquainted with the field have made.

The Country Church in America has gone through three stages, and has reached a fourth stage, or is now lingering behind in one of the three early stages having failed to reach the fourth stage.

The following are the four stages:

1. *The first stage is that of pioneer struggle seeking a foothold in the life of a new settlement.* It is remarkable with what unanimity new settlements in America, as if under the wise guidance of some unseen spiritual administrator, almost immediately founded the Church and the school, twin institutions of the higher life and culture.

The struggle for a place in the sun made by settlers and homesteaders has been reflected in their heroic struggle together to build a church. One could hardly distinguish or discriminate as to the strength of the motives leading to better social life or those leading to doing the will of God, in the sacrifices the early settlers

made to organize a Church and build a place of worship. The social motive they would doubtless disclaim, for those were days in America most certainly of pronounced individualism. The Church building was not an elegant or ornate affair—simply a “meeting-house,” a place to meet God and to meet one another, and in their own thought principally the former. The pioneer farmer was solitary. In the nature of the case, it was so, and the controlling idea and policy of the surveys of land, and of homesteading, are largely to blame. That the American farmer has ever been slow to combine with his fellows and slow to learn the value of coöperation is not to be attributed to any bias of human nature in the farmer as such, except that the selective process in settling America may have made it easier for the solitary minded to settle on the land, and the socially minded to found the towns and cities.

However, the pioneer Church stressed individualism and individual salvation, and seldom if ever rose to a complete sense of the Church as a social institution. Of course the by-products of that age of well-nigh absolute individualism in religion—of high-wrought evangelism when the idea was to get the soul saved—were many and important. Rigid and austere morals, together with diligence in work, were the implications of the preaching and teaching of the Church of the pioneer day. The tradition of those days is still upon us, and one of the hardest things to do in these days is to establish the idea of the Church as a social institution, intimately bound up with the economic, educational, and social welfare of the community, dependent upon factors operating in these fields, and in turn affecting these areas of life and interest.



The pioneer days have left us many Churches substantially unchanged. There are Country Churches in Virginia and the Carolinas, for example, where the social economy is largely rural, which have had a continued, flourishing history of a century and a half. Indigenous to the life of fairly homogeneous populations, some of these Churches have maintained a ministry remarkably unchanged in emphasis, through the decades. They have slowly adopted some ideas and methods introduced by general workers, whose suggestions came out of the experience of town and city Churches of a later date. The same permanence and slow changing methods is seen in the history of Churches of the Middle West which have remained dominantly agricultural in interest and outlook.

Some Mission Boards and general agencies of Church extension have followed with financial assistance and oversight the founding of Churches in newer communities throughout the century and a half of our life as a nation. Even to-day occasional pioneer communities are appearing in hitherto unsettled or sparsely settled areas of the Great West, and manifest the same struggle of the Church to secure a foothold. Recently it was the writer's privilege to visit a neighborhood in the open country of North Dakota, where a little group of his fellow religionists were eager to secure a Church building, having only recently organized their Church of some twenty members in a settlement then only six years old and twenty-five miles away from the railroad. The Home Mission Board was engaging to assist financially in providing this building, and the willingness on the part of the people to sacrifice out of their meager economic margins to have a Church were all

but pathetic. Here was a pioneer church, contemporary with our day, reproducing many of the features of the early pioneer days of the now old settled States, with of course the modifying influences of some of the experiences in Church life, which lie between then and now.

2. *The period of growth and prosperity.* With the subduing of the land and the exploiting of the soil in many cases, came a measure of economic prosperity to the sons of the pioneers. A new Church building reflecting the added prosperity took the place of the first building.

This second Church building marked as a rule the coming of the farm family church. It was customary for entire families to attend and sit in the family pew and a great part of the simple social life of the community centered in and around the church. It was a period of a high degree of community homogeneity and practical equality. Of course certain farmers came to be large landowners and wealthier than the rest, but little class cleavage was manifested, and such is the case even now in vast areas of rural America. Neighborliness and exchange of work between farmsteads was the rule, and this period marks the golden epoch in American agricultural life. In some parts of the country and among the Scandinavians and German immigrants of the Northwest this type of church is by far most frequently found, save as overchurching and city drift have depleted memberships and prevented or removed church prosperity. The program of the Country Church of this stage or period was nearly always one preaching service a Sunday, with a feeble attempt at a Bible School—no prayer-meeting, or, if in a village, a small prayer or midweek service, little or

no attention to work with and for age and sex groups. An annual series of revival services or protracted meeting which was the usual method of recruiting and an occasional social, constituted the entire program of the church, apart from the every Sunday or less frequent preaching service.

Yet this church, which played an important part in the life of the people, and pastoral visitation, which was expected and for the most part welcomed, constituted the major contacts of the religious leader with his people.

When cliques or social cleavage through groups of families, providing for their social life apart from the community, arose, the cleavage often registered in the life of the church, or in the community, as a divisive influence. The church could seldom overcome such disrupting influences and multitudes of additional churches originated in some split or division between families of a community, and community-mindedness was a rare phenomenon of the farmer of this stage, and for that matter is all too little a force and factor in any part of the country even now.

Some outstanding preachers and revivalists developed under the conditions just described, and a good preacher and a tolerable pastor or home-to-home visitor, or a tolerable preacher and a good pastoral visitant, were the qualifications for success on the part of the minister. Seldom did the pastor dream of organizing his forces beyond the simplest sort of organization for purposes of administering the communion and passing upon the qualifications of a prospective new member, or one who was under the displeasure or threatened discipline of the Church.

3. *The period of struggle against rural folk depletion or rural tardiness and backwardness.* Of course many a farmers' church has been lost through debt or bad financing in a period of unstable prices, when debts incurred, for a more pretentious building than interest and zeal to pay could be found, brought a burden too great. Many rural communities have never developed normally. Isolated and far from profitable markets, keen competition arose with farming lands opened up, in the newly settled West, and kept them from ever getting far removed from the privations and inadequate institutional life of the pioneer days. Always struggling to maintain a church, the loss of building by decay or accident of fire meant a crushing burden, often the collapse of the entire enterprise.

Older communities, with fairly well developed and prosperous agricultural life in the East, have been depleted through removal of the earlier stock by migration westward, and often large and once prosperous churches have been allowed to fall into disrepair and disuse, or bitter struggle to get out from under debts has led to utter discouragement and even abandonment of the church. All over New England a half century ago, and even more recently in many parts of New York and Ohio, migration and removal have left churches which were formerly strong and flourishing in a hopeless and struggling condition. City drift has had its effect as well.

Typical cases can be cited. In a certain community in Vermont in the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century a Baptist church flourished with three or four hundred members. A Methodist Church only less strong but self-sustaining shared the community

(township) with the Baptist Church. According to the records the population of the township was just twice as large in 1845 as in 1920. Three-fourths of a century had passed and the population had been reduced to half the number, and it would not be far from the truth to say that the quality of life and energy of those remaining is reduced in proportion. Lacking in initiative and capacity, this area has suffered by folk depletion until leadership is scarce; the following is suspicious and unwilling. Both of these churches were in run-down condition in 1920 and had only a name to live. The writer was present with the officials of the Baptist and Methodist denominations when, by vote of the people of both depleted and struggling churches and agreement of denominational authorities, the M. E. Church withdrew from the community and turned the religious work over to the Baptists. The reverse of this process had been carried through a week before in another community, the Baptist Church, nearly dead, voluntarily closing the work and withdrawing to give place to the Methodist Church. Thus "reciprocal exchange" has been resorted to as an attempted solution of the condition which rural depletion has brought about. Whatever method may ultimately be found to meet the situation, the fact is evident in many older sections of the country, of rural decay and consequent decadence of many Country Churches.

4. *The period of the survival of the fittest and rural readjustment.* We are in this period in much of the older section of the country, and the mortality of Country Churches has caused great consternation and alarm, so much so that some less well-informed ecclesiastics are in a veritable panic, seeking what they call a solution of

the Country Church Problem. There are dead and dying churches by the score all over the country. There are Country Churches of distinction doing a marvelous work, and in between the two extremes of churches—those which have outlived their usefulness and have only a name to live and the outstanding churches which have found a way of assured success and acceptable service—are *myriads of churches which need redirection, readjustment, and rehabilitation, and can be brought to a higher level of service and greater stability and promise.*

In the State of Nebraska in one of the larger denominations it is reported that more town and country churches have closed their doors and literally perished than the churches that now live and carry on work. What is the explanation? Without doubt too many churches of that denomination were started by an overzealous Home Mission propaganda, and in competition with other churches of the same and other closely related denominations they found no assured place of service. In many cases it is doubtless a clear gain to the kingdom of God that they closed.

In a small village of New York is a church which in 1850 was in a flourishing condition. With over four hundred members at that time, it was reckoned among the strong Country Churches of the denomination in the State. Several ministers, and at least one evangelist of national reputation, went out from that church in its palmy days. To-day it has ceased to send up a report, and its less than forty members reported a few years ago are still carried in the yearbook of the denomination against the name of that church, but starred as a non-reporting church. Twenty years ago when this writer chanced to preach in that church the building was some-

what out of repair. A fine old pipe organ in the back gallery had then long been silent, and it seemed to the preacher, who was addressing about forty people in an auditorium intended for four hundred, as if he were yelling down an empty rain barrel. What was the trouble in that church? Simply that the younger generations of the original settlers and developers of that fertile section of the Empire State had gone West; Irish immigrants had come in and absolutely no effort had been made to win them. A Roman Catholic church had come. This church of which we have been writing suffered more by removal than the M. E. Church; and being unable to survive the economic and population changes, it goes the way of all the earth. The M. E. Church has suffered, but survived; and as one leg of a three-legged circuit it keeps the light of the Evangelical faith burning in the village as best it can. This situation is typical of hundreds—indeed, thousands—of similar situations.

What we have on our hands now is a process of readjustment caused by migrations, economic changes, transportation improvements, rise of industrial cities and villages. Churches are dying; are being moved to village and town centers; are being combined; are being associated with churches in similar plight in circuits; and while all too little attention is being given to the whole process in certain parts of the country, it may be said that, on the whole, *a new day is dawning for the church of the country.*

What are the evidences of the coming of a new day for the Country Church?

1. The Country Church shares with all other social institutions the attention of Publicists, Statesmen, Edu-

cators, Church Administrators and all who are interested in social progress. Those who have any social faith and who believe that by study and research a social situation may be understood, and then the factors and forces which have caused the condition controlled and a better condition created, are hopeful for the Country Church.

An increasing number of national and State leaders are getting at the task of rehabilitation and redirection.

2. It has been discovered that the Church is involved in the entire country life problem, and interest in this country life movement includes interest in the Country Church. The appointment of the Roosevelt Country Life Commission marked an epoch in American Country Life. The findings of that Commission are presented under the following heads:

1. The Main Deficiencies in Country Life.

- (a) Disregard of the inherent rights of land workers.
- (b) Highways.
- (c) Soil depletion and its effects.
- (d) Agricultural labor.
- (e) Health in the open country.
- (f) Woman's work on the farm.

2. The General Corrective Forces That Should Be Set in Motion.

- (a) Need of agricultural or country life surveys.
- (b) Need of redirected education.
- (c) Necessity of working together (coöperation).
- (d) The Country Church.
- (e) Personal ideals and local leadership.

The last three belong distinctively to religious people as their share of the task. To promote coöperation, to



strengthen the place, program, and influence of the Church, and to develop leadership with right ideals. Religious people are addressing themselves to this task.

3. Thus the Country Church itself is coming to a consciousness of its own conditions and needs, and is feeling the urgency of the new order of things in the country. The large denominations are giving increasing attention to the Country Church as such, and specialists are studying the conditions and needs and best methods of meeting those needs. Lying before me as I write is the Prospectus of a Pastors' School, one of twelve similar standard two weeks' summer schools for pastors held last summer (1924, by the M. E. Church, South) in different parts of the South. In this particular school about one hundred and eighty were registered and three-fourths of them were pastors of country churches. The curriculum included the following courses for country pastors: Bible; Evangelism; Minister's Message for the Needs of To-day; Rural Church Methods; The Pupil; Principles of Teaching; The Church and Country Life; Church Building and Equipment; Sunday School Management in the Small School.

A great body of experience is being gained by educators and Church administrators as to such schools, institutes, Conference and study groups, and a much more intelligent approach to the problems of the Country Church is being made. The days of careless rule of thumb methods of conducting church work in the country will soon pass.

There are on my desk at this moment of writing three of the splendid publications of the Institute of Religious and Social Research. This organization has had a body

of experts at work in various parts of the country studying the various questions and conditions which are of interest in the Country Church, and over a score of high-grade publications are now available.

Then too there is an increasing number of men who are looking forward to the country pastorate as a life calling, or are pledged to give part of their life to the leadership of a Country Church. Typical of this new interest is the fine work of a recent graduate of a seminary and of the University of Pennsylvania, who purposely chose a somewhat rundown Country Church as his first pastorate to make a sociological experiment. He has been won to consider devoting his life to the Country Church. Demonstration churches of various sorts are dotting the map of rural America, and men of training and consecration are giving themselves to the working out of ways and means of rehabilitating the Country Church.

Persistent problems and difficulties remain, to some of which we are to give more prolonged attention in later chapters; but we are even now warranted in visualizing a picture of a new Country Church rising out of the present halting, inadequate church of the countryside, strongly conscious of its possibilities and resources, with a program adapted to modern life and meeting all the community's needs for leadership in spiritual and moral concerns. A new day for the Country Church may dawn—its dawning may not be regarded as inevitable; but it awaits an intelligent participation on the part of those who have the vision, and see the need, and who will help control and guide the forces which will bring it about. Country ministers are feeling a new self-respect and dignity of workmanship; they are

## 22 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

receiving long-merited recognition, and new recruits are coming. If the lines can be held a little longer by that band of faithful soldiers of the Cross, soon the victory will come, for the push has already begun to make the Country Church what it can and ought to be. Please God, this drive will succeed.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MINISTER OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

"There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

—*Gospel of John.*

"What went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, more than a prophet."

—*Gospel of Matthew.*

WITHOUT attempting to find any scapegoat on whom to place all the weaknesses and failures of the Country Church, it is nevertheless true that the major responsibility to save the situation and to lead us forth to fullest achievement is upon the pastor of the Country Church.

No great body of servants of human welfare, on the whole, have done more noble service for a cause than have the goodly company of men who have served the Country Churches and led them in their formative and critical periods. With varying degrees of ability and training, some of one and some of many talents, under conditions inspiring and depressing, for remunerations too often utterly inadequate to meet returning needs of self and family, these men of the Cross have marched to high duty. Saints of God, scholars and statesmen, community builders, great preachers and theologians, mighty administrators have been numbered with this host. We should pause a moment to do homage to the

country minister, whose exploits for righteousness are too seldom sensed and sung.

The country minister shares with ministers in other areas of service a wonderful heritage and tradition, and is in the line of prophets and priests, bishops and presbyters, missionaries and martyrs. If tradition of worthy service in a continuing succession and exalted vocation can awaken consecration to present service, the country minister of to-day ought to be moved to extend himself to the utmost to meet the expectation of a glorious cloud of witnesses.

The modern minister is inheritor of parts of a manifold tradition of workmanship, and functions in the realm of divine and human service in the name of God's religion.\*

1. He is the successor in some measure of the functions of the *Prophet of Israel*. This does not mean that he is to occupy that rôle continuously or that it is his major function; but as these men of ancient days stood forth to speak God's will, often in a perverse and untoward generation, so the Christian minister is a proclaimer of the visions of divine order and of God's goings in the realm of human affairs.

The function of a prophet in Israel is too often thought of as that of foretelling or predicting coming events and miraculously unfolding some of the pages of history which have not yet been written in achieved events. This is to mistake the core and essence of the place of the prophet. As the word by which he has been called implies, he is a forth-speaker, a proclaimer rather than a foreteller or predictor. The German

\* Discussion suggested by "The Prophetic Ministry for To-day," by Charles D. Williams.

*prædiger*, preacher, quite accurately takes over the idea, although the German word involves other ideas as well. He is the one who speaks "in behalf of" God and righteousness.

The country minister inherits this exalted function, which of course is only to be exercised upon special occasions and in situations of outstanding need when God must have an interpreter. The ancient prophet was sometimes called a seer (Hebrew, *Hose*)—one who sees into the divine meaning of events and who challenges his community to see with him. For this very reason the minister should be a student of events, of current human problems, and of the course of history in which God has unfolded His purpose and will. He will then be able to interpret these social and economic problems in the perspective which is God's own ordered knowledge. He will throw light where men need light to see. He will make a contribution to the spiritual understanding without which the generations grope in darkness. It is a daring venture for a preacher thus to assume to speak for God and to shed light from God on the current problems of his day; but this, even this, is a part of his high calling. "In Thy light may we see light," is the Psalmist's prayer, and it is through the minister that God brings partial answer to this prayer.

A profound student of human affairs must the minister of God ever be. He stands on the watch tower of current affairs, and when war's alarms or devastating social conditions endanger human well-being, he announces God's purpose and will. Indeed it may be even now that God's hour of history has struck for the elimination of war between nations as a means of adjusting international disputes. What he sees the minister must

proclaim. It may be that in the devastations of modern industry God's providence and purpose are being thwarted. The minister's will be the voice crying in this wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord and challenge men to make ready for the coming of Industrial Democracy and justice. Woe unto those who join farm to farm and make it impossible for tenants ever to own a homestead.

The rural-minded prophet Micah, who was a younger contemporary of the city-dwelling Isaiah, may well furnish the country preacher with his text. "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Farm blocs, Land Tenure Schemes, Plans of Rural Credit, Reclamation Projects, Conservation Policies all have light shed on them from God. The people need for their spiritual health an occasional message which interprets these great interests and the movements with which they are bound up in the light of eternity. It is a rarefied atmosphere of adventure into which the minister must go and into which he leads the thinking of his people; but thus to see and to lead his people to see his work and theirs in its bigger and loftier bearings is to give significance to parish duties otherwise apparently trivial and commonplace. The Country Church often languishes because the people have no vision, and it is "like priest, like people." "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord."

Let the country minister venture occasionally—*only on such occasions as when the burden of the Lord is on his soul*—to look into the eternal order of the heavens, into the very mind of God, and then tell his people what

he sees, and dignity and grandeur will be the ornaments of his ministry. Perhaps only once or twice a year, perhaps more often, will these visions come; but if the heart and mind are kept open, sincerely tuned in with God, these "burdens of the Lord," these "thus saiths" will come. And when they come there will be joy in delivering them to the people. Exalted moods are by the very nature of the case infrequent; outstanding messages may be few and far between, but sodden and sad is that ministry into which they never come.

To put what has just been written into more prosy parlance, it is to say that from time to time, by deeper study and meditation, and spiritual self-discipline, the minister grapples with some vexing problem and tries to see it through Christ's eyes. And in the fearless application of the spirit and teaching of Christ to the problems of our day, he builds—I use the word "builds" advisedly—he constructs a way of thinking and living which he exhibits in an outstanding address to his community. This structure of righteousness he pictures as the vision of truth for the people. Great thoughts and a few great utterances growing out of them will redeem any country minister's work from mediocrity.

Study the prophets, study human history and modern society, and then say fearlessly what God thinks of man's civilization and ways of life.

2. The minister is the inheritor of some of the functions of the *Priest of Bible Religion*. The priests were the conservers of what had been achieved. They were the disciplinarians and drill sergeants of ancient Israel; and while their work was often dull and monotonous, it was the process by which great ideas and inspirations were made effective, and by which the ordinary life level



of the people was regularized in righteousness. Advising, counseling, commanding, demonstrating in detail, the priest officiated in the ritual. The ordered tactics of religion, the *hep!! hep!! hep! hep! hep!* of the good life were made a part of the habits of the people through the untiring efforts of the priest. Spasmodic and exalted emotional activities have been needed to give religion power, but ultimately morale has hinged on discipline and dependable, everyday loyalty.

In Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson" we learn the secret of this great general's power and leadership. It had at least two aspects: he believed and practiced being aggressive and striking suddenly, effectively, and when and where his opponents least expected, and—more important still—he trained and drilled and disciplined his troops. They often squirmed and resisted, but he knew that the secret of being prepared was in having a *rank and file*, and a *staff* who knew where they belonged, what they were expected to do, and *who could also have confidence that the others who were in the campaign would know and do their part*. The morale of his troops became well-nigh invincible.

Picture a self-disciplined, aggressive country minister who has taught his lieutenants their task—who has organized his church and parish on approved lines, who has patiently taught the manual of arms of Evangelism, personal work, tithing, etc., to his people—large company or little squad, receiving directions for some great forward movement of the Kingdom of God! His church under his lead will move forward to do surprising great service. "All the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, for the people had a mind to work," and had been drilled each to take care of the

duty "over against his own house." The responsibility of an individual or a group is for what they have been led to expect and trained to do.

As priest, the minister thus mediates divine intelligence and efficiency to the individual—he consoles, he counsels, he develops the average man. It is hard work, work easily underrated by the minister himself, but it is great work and is the basis of continuing achievement. Study the best methods. Plan your work. Work your plan. An increment of strength results. Things get done. Read, sometime, Henderson's "Life of Stonewall Jackson." Stand like a stone wall if that is the thing to do. Hit like a sledge hammer on occasion. Be prepared in person and prepare the people. Train the people concerning what is expected of them. Expect them to do the routine of duties in which they have been drilled.

3. The minister falls heir to many of the duties of the administrator and executive of the early Church. The splendid organization of the field and forces of early Christianity was in large part the secret of the conquests made. This is a matter largely of strategy, of careful carrying out of ideas and suggestions which experience in building and administering institutions has given humanity; the adjustment of persons to persons in committee and other kinds of work; the study of traits of character with a view to selecting and placing helpers. In short, the problem of a staff which will execute the plans decided upon. There is the church year with the recurring events, collections, activities, and program of work. Foresight and care must be exercised in scouting out, in considering in plenty of time the next matters requiring attention. Records and remembrancers, sys-

tem and order, timely suggestions here and there keep the wheels within the wheels moving efficiently. For example, in taking a freewill offering it has been demonstrated that envelopes with brief printed purpose on them, secure from one to five times as large an offering as merely passing the basket for the loose change people may have on their person. Yet many ministers in the country—or city, for that matter—never utilize this bit of experience and see to it that the envelopes are ready in plenty of time for special offerings.

A carefully prepared calendar in one's study or office reminds in plenty of time to notify members of committees of some important meeting, of the desire to have reports formulated of the subject matter or agenda to be taken up. So often a committee is expected to meet and only half the members present. No notices have been sent—no call given. And when a committee meets no agenda or list of things to be considered has been prepared by any one. Poor administration this! The wise administrator or executive does not take anything for granted. He keeps oil on the bearings of all the machinery of the organization, and anticipates possible breakdown of plans and is prepared for emergencies.

It is an easy generalization to make when one goes into a service and finds the minister fumbling in the hymn book for appropriate songs, or soliciting for a volunteer organist, that he belittles the value of *management*. He would hardly make a good bishop. Yet to do the parish work well and to carry forward the many and increasing enterprises of a successful church, requires the minister to be a real administrator. Many less able speakers make great success of Church work through attention to organization and management.

Great pastors are men who fit sermon, service of the house of God, multiplied activities of various departments, and recurring events of a Church calendar into a carefully executed scheme of general church administration. Boards and commissions of the general Church can rely on such pastors to keep the church life and activities up to par by forethought and executive ability.

4. The minister in the Christian Church in all ages, especially in Evangelical Protestantism, inherits many of the functions which called out and developed the Greek orator or master of assemblies. The local democracies of ancient Greece, the ecclesia or congregations of those whose votes were the expressed will of the State, called forth the talents of the rhetorician or orator. Public life and control of the public mind made the master of assemblies a potent factor. The style of rhetorical expression might change from time to time, but the essential purpose was to inform the mind of the group or congregation, stir the emotions, and often to move the will in connection with some contemporary matter or project. It is true that oratory was used to propagandize a population and set up a plan for long-time actions and attitudes, but more often the purpose was to enlist for immediate action.

As a preacher or evangelist or mover of men to decisions of various sorts on the basis of an informed mind and convinced judgment, the Christian minister has had no equal. The sermon has been an agency of comfort and consolation in general and particular experiences of need, of quickening and guiding influences, of moving to believe in and to do some important task.

Hence the emphasis on sacred rhetoric or homiletics in the preparing of ministers for their task. The

preparation and delivery of sermons (orations) has constituted the major objective of many of the seminaries or training schools for ministers. While it is probably true that the spoken word or discourse will always have great influence in moving people to right thinking and conduct, it is also true that Christianity will depend less on the oration and more on other means for its spread and influence. Goethe's phrase, "The Highest Cannot Be Spoken," has a great measure of truth in it, and that minister who relies solely on speech to put forward the work of the Church will be found wanting in many respects. Yet there is great need to-day to analyze the elements of power in persuasive eloquence and to utilize the spoken word to inspire, instruct, inform, and persuade people, in the name of high truth and ideals. The simple, direct, clear, pictorial method of preaching—brief and to the point—with time in connection with the services of the Church to the people for demonstration of personal and social interest, will best meet the situation.

What a wealth of pictorial material the country preacher has in the Bible and Christian history to draw from! Word pictures suitable to rural life, or life anywhere, adorn the pages of the sacred Scriptures, and happy is that minister, so far as his preaching duties are concerned, who has formed the habit and adopted the practice of finding and using them. Notice a few samples:

"Break up your fallow ground" (Hosea x:12). This is a composite picture of an idle field, often grown up with weeds, not only failing to produce but in danger of infesting other lands with wind-blown weed seeds. How easy to get the picture in the minds of hearers

and then make the transition to the idea of unproductive or even menacing lives where slack or evil habits become a noisome example to youth! What a challenge to bring the entire life under cultivation! A splendid series of not too long sermons can be easily built around this text. One of them should be on "The Use of the Margin" or the wise use of leisure as a means of spiritual and intellectual growth and production.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. vi:7). Here is a fine rural text! But it is nearly always made a warning to those who sow or allow bad habits and wrong practices to root and grow, just as though good seed is never sown, and good deeds do not produce good fruitage. Why not have a ringing sermon on a most obvious truth that the man who sows kindness, love, truth, generosity, the coöperative spirit will inevitably reap a crop of like kind.

"Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer" (Hosea iv:16). Here is real backsliding for you! The picture is of a calf being led by a farm boy to the pasture, hanging back and skidding unwillingly along a road made slippery by recent rain, unwilling to go gladly forward to the satisfying feeding ground. How like human nature even in the Church—resisting God's leading and unwilling to go forward to the land of heart's desire! "He would have fed them as a lamb in a large place," is the context that caps the climax of stupidity and backwardness of not only Country Churches but all classes of God's people.

"The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass her master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people do not consider" (Isa. i:3). Here is a part of Isaiah's indictment in the chapter, called the Great Arraignment, of

Israel's stupidity and inconsiderateness. Smile at the congregation—you can say almost any sharp and cutting thing if your smile seems to include yourself in the indictment—when you announce the subject, "The Backward and Stupid Community." More stupid than dumb animals is just what Isaiah means. God's people are contrasted with ox and ass who know where their welfare is to be found. The appeal should be to common sense in seeking to secure real satisfactions for the life.

The writer was in a country community once which had recently rejected the offer of a gift to the community of a new high school building. The fear was that it would increase taxes to maintain it. A lawsuit had just been gone through with, and friends of the school project had won. It is conceivable that the pastor of the church which now stands next this beautiful school building (a community hall just across the road) could have preached a well-announced sermon on this text from Isaiah. He could have shown the inevitable benefits to the entire community of a new standard school equipment, and have persuaded, through stirring public opinion, the School Board to accept the school without a lawsuit. The sermon could have been printed at a fraction of the expense of the lawsuit and read and discussed in the homes, and the victory would have been one of the minister and the church in bringing the community to a higher level.

"Ephraim is a cake not turned" (Hosea vii: 9). What a word picture! We can see the force of the word picture to convey ideas from an illustration in Dickens where the little girl is asked to define a hill. Who can define a hill? Dickens makes the little girl say, "A hill

is a field with its back up." There is a word picture for you! Hosea, who was a farmer, was greatly interested in the bakery when he came to town. Half baked! That is a picture of many of God's people who are well developed on one side of their nature but undeveloped on the other.

Preaching is glorious business and the Bible, the most up-to-date book in the world, furnishes vast treasures of materials for effective, dynamic, brief, and to-the-point preaching. Comfort the saints of course, occasionally, but the sermon should never coddle the saints. Too many big things need to be thought, felt, and done to spend any time with mere sugar sticks.

5. There is an Old Testament teacher and worker so often overlooked in our day, but his function was practical wisdom. He is called the Wise or the Sage. (Jer. xvii: 18.) He sat in the gate (the court or school house) and by use of proverbs and maxims of his own make, or those handed down as part of the racial wisdom and tradition, he advised on practical matters.

How often the country minister who is long years in the same community, and who has come to know the ins and outs of the life of the people, becomes the adviser, truly the father, of the parish. He counsels his "sons" in matters of everyday practice and conduct and interprets the accumulated wisdom of the ages. He helps to put the fear of God and a high sense of duty into mind and heart of the young as a father instructeth his sons. Vocational guidance is only a new way of saying what multitudes of wide-awake ministers have been doing all through the years. Let ministers keep up this good work.

The minister should be kindly critic and reviser of



current maxims which inadequately express life at best, and the formulator of the real wisdom of the countryside. "He taught them with many Proverbs and sayings of old."

6. There is another phase of the minister's work coming to have recognition and for which some, although too little, training and preparation are provided. *He is the Social Case worker par excellence.*

Case work is a fine art and one which has great attractions for a man who really loves people; who loves to deal personally with a human life to bring it to full development of resident powers and endowments. The country minister of the old school was an adept at this sort of work in his pastoral visitation before any technique or philosophy of social case work had been even thought of.

What is case work? It is finding the key to a personality, usually of one with some shortage in development, or some bias or bad tendency in the life, and straightening out and bringing to normal, wholesome expression, through personal influence and guidance of the otherwise unadjusted or misdirected or wayward life. To illustrate: Miss Mary Richmond describes in "What Is Case Work?" the process by which the teachers of Helen Keller accomplished the marvels that they wrought in the life of the blind, deaf, and speechless girl. She was patiently worked with until the key to unlock the darkness of her life was finally found and step-by-step methods were discovered to lead the soul forward to a development all but miraculous. Indeed it is the miracle of constructive love and personality-building!

The minister is the original social case worker, and

only when parish chores and petty activities kept the city minister too busy to deal with broken homes and hedged-in lives did the technical social case worker come into being.

A wonderful technique has been devised through the experience of social workers dealing with slum or near-slum families and individuals whom environment and misfortune had shut out from fullness of life, and the technique is now available. *The heart and soul of all case work, of all rehabilitation of family and personality and training for effective service, is in a disposition and attitude of good will and love which the minister is presumed to have.* In the country the social case worker need not be provided *if*, and only *if*, the country minister performs this function for which he has the right of way ahead of all social workers.

*The country minister should look out and especially love and help the off-side people.* In every village or country neighborhood will be found one or more families where an under-privileged condition leaves lives dwarfed and undeveloped. "There is much fruit in the tillage of the poor." Great possibilities inhere in many of these people, and following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ the minister goes to rescue and bring back to fullness of life the "lost," the "last," and the "least." Thus it is, he "makes his calling and election sure." If he cannot deal with, win, and redeem people out of situations where poverty and broken homes, waywardness and cussedness have wrought havoc with personalities, he has not made full proof of his ministry. If this writer were to start in again as minister of a country parish, he would definitely and systematically look out, cultivate, befriend, and seek to save the off-side, under-

privileged folk, and do his utmost to win their confidence and affection principally for the sake of the children, but also for his own soul's sake and for the sake of knowing by experience the heart and purpose of Jesus Christ. If one can learn to do case work with "one of the least of these," he need have no fear to face strong-willed, self-complacent middle class folk whose ways of life are more nearly normal and similar to his own. This minister would also study how to approach, win the confidence, and lead to a fuller degree of consecration the well-to-do and so-called élite of the community. Most country ministers either fear or fawn upon the strong and powerful, or condemn them as too worldly and worthless to the church to spend any time with. What a mistake! Democratic religion and Church life need to be redeemed from mediocrity by conserving to the full fellowship and service of the Church the rich and strong.

In certain most fertile areas of rural America we have lost the so-called big fellows, the rich and influential landowners. Rural Protestantism has persistently "lost at the top." Why? The answer is that the minister has been afraid or backed away from a hard "case." The conversion of the strong, to use Professor Rauschenbusch's fine phrase, is one of the needful things in the town and Country Church objectives. They can be won by patient "case" work. My last pastorate was with a city church where a fine body of about a dozen well-to-do men and their families were deeply interested in all the church projects. How come? Seven years had elapsed since the closing of a former pastorate of a man who had grappled with these rising young business men and had held or won them to the program of the Church,

to prayer meeting, and to Sunday school. What a help to all succeeding pastors! And at the same time this predecessor of mine had not neglected the poor, but in and out among them he had gone winning his way and winning them. Is it any wonder that an unusually large number of young people of that Church and congregation were seeking in higher education the preparation of life and personality for larger kingdom tasks?

The minister of the countryside is the normal friend and stimulator of all personal development, especially of the young people. "The love of Christ constraineth us," keeps us at it, gives us tact and patience, and helps us win through. And "the love of Christ is no wavering, flickering emotion, but a steadfast will and purpose bent upon achieving fellowship."

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MINISTER OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH (*Continued*)

ANY present-day discussion of the country minister would be incomplete without some extended reference to the Patron Saint of the Country Church, in some respects the greatest country minister of all the Christian centuries, John Frederic Oberlin, of Waldersbach, Alsace, France, 1740-1826.

The life of this saint and servitor of an isolated country parish is fully recorded in "The Story of John Frederic Oberlin," by A. F. Beard (The Pilgrim Press). My recital will be taken largely from that narrative, which is a Church History classic, and will be illustrated somewhat from a pilgrimage made to Waldersbach, spending the first Sunday of September, 1921, worshiping in the Oberlin Church and dining and visiting at the presbyterie (parsonage) with the fine family of Rev. Charles Herzog, the fourth successor of Oberlin.

1. *We notice first Oberlin's preparation for his life as a country pastor.* He was of a good family of Strasbourg, and subsequent events proved that he had some rare gifts as teacher and administrator, which suggested to many of his friends at the first, and from time to time, that he was wasting his talents in the out-of-the-way place where he was working. This is a temptation to Church administrators and to young ministers themselves. Promising and developing young country min-

isters are deflected from service with the Country Church by misguided friends and advisers, even ecclesiastical leaders, who counsel them to relinquish the country and seek service in the city. *Oberlin never once felt that his talents and training were being misappropriated in a country parish.* In this he was wiser than nine out of ten theological professors and presidents who do all possible to dissuade young men from taking the leadership of a Country Church. Some obscure foreign mission post makes a sentimental appeal which warrants the encouraging of choice young graduates to accept such appointment. And well such a post may call forth the highest and best.

It may be venturesome to predict that in another quarter century some of the most honored and honorable posts in Christian service will be Country Churches led, in the missionary spirit, by the highest type of college and seminary graduate.

But to return from this willful digression. Oberlin was educated at the University of Strasbourg, B.A. at the age of eighteen, and Doctor of Philosophy five years later. He had taken as extra studies courses in medicine and botany, both of which providentially stood him in good stead in his parish work among isolated folk later.

2. *Oberlin's consecration.* His was the true missionary spirit and worthily did he represent the long tradition of absolute devotion to the will of God, expressed in a revelation of where his life might count for most. In his journal, kept from the time he was twenty years of age, we find the following entry under date of January 1, 1760. It is his act of consecration. "I am now convinced of Thy rights. I desire nothing more than to

belong to the Holy God. I give myself to Thee this day in the most solemn way. I consecrate all that I am and all that I have, the faculties of my soul, the members of my body, my portion and my time." This he indorsed and renewed at Waldersbach, January 1, 1770, after he was well entered on his life work.

Any minister who goes to a country appointment with a feeling of soreness or disappointment would do well to read the Life of Oberlin, then take his Bible, open at Philippians ii: 5-11, and sit and meditate on the vicarious career of Jesus who democratized His own high privilege in behalf of mankind. Then if his soreness does not begin to leave him he had better plan to leave the Country Church and perhaps leave the ministry. This is said for the reason that the writer, in conversations across the country with different ministers, has suspected the presence of pique and disappointment in some cases, because of shortened opportunity and honors, real or supposed, withheld. But we hasten to say that on the whole no more consecrated body of men can be found in Christendom than the great majority of country ministers who are truly working under fearful limitations of training and without fair appreciation and recompense.

3. *Oberlin's call after he had decided or thought he had decided on his life work and had accepted a chaplaincy in the military service.* His biographer tells how one evening, when indisposed with toothache, lying in his humbly furnished room where he had learned to battle successfully with poverty of resources, a missionary from the Vosges Mountains enters the apartment to urge on Oberlin to be his successor in the parish at Waldersbach. Pastor Stuber had done his best in this

254.2

HAR

28339

out-of-the-way place, and now that his wife was dying he was seeking a successor and had been referred to Oberlin. Oberlin offered all manner of objections, but Stuber was firm in the conviction that God had directed him to this young man. Stuber described all the hardships and fearfully unfavorable conditions, the ignorance and backwardness of the people, their stubbornness against all efforts at improvement.

Put all the unfavorable things that the recent surveys of the Institute of Social and Religious Research brings out about the country parish together, and in essence they are represented in the place to which Oberlin is being urged to go. Says Stuber: "Four districts even poorer than the mother parish are also to be served; not a single practicable road from village to village; deep mud holes among the cabins and huts; the fruit, wild cherries, apples, and pears fit only for swine; and the inhabitants, abandoned to the completest indifference, have not the least concern to ameliorate their condition."

Oberlin suggested that they appeal to God to enlighten them as to his duty. Stuber prayed, and as they rose from kneeling on the tiles of the attic room it was settled. Oberlin would go to the mountains if he could be released from the position of Chaplain in the army, for which he had been engaged.

That was easily arranged, as many were eager for the attractive chaplaincy; and on March 30, 1767, Oberlin arrived at Waldersbach to begin a pastorate of fifty-nine long years in which his radiant personality was woven into the fabric of the life of the community. He lifted the people out of poverty, ignorance, superstition, and irreligion up to God, and stood before kings to tell the story of a saved community. The Acts of the Apostles



contain no story of spiritual achievement more thrilling than the remarkable achievements of this consecrated country minister.

4. *Oberlin's program, developed through the years, included spiritual, intellectual, and social service activities, if one cares to make a distinction between these.* From the first he began to make an inventory of the personal and spiritual resources of the community, and through the years he kept this up; hence his cumulative and continuous survey before the day of social and religious surveys gave him intimate knowledge of every soul in the parishes. His journal of the religious life and conditions running through many years of his work is now among the relics in the parsonage at Waldersbach, and there we looked at his entries, carefully made in perfectly legible French.

He engaged literally in a "cure of souls." His preaching was vigorous and practical. Early in his ministry he decided to improve the educational opportunity of the people and led in the building and founding of a school which he administered and in which he worked out very advanced theories of education for his day. "His infant (primary) schools were probably the first ever established, and in many of his ideas and methods of instruction and industrial training, both manual and agricultural, he anticipated Pestalozzi by forty years, and Froebel by full seventy years, in many of his educational theories. It has been said that Froebel's best thought was not in relation to the kindergarten, but in relation to the education of adults, to make the whole community a unit of intellectual and moral coöperation. Oberlin not only announced this theory, but he was putting it into practical effect, amid

untold opposition, many years before Froebel was born. His infant schools practiced modern kindergarten methods. . . . Instruction in these schools (he had one in each district) was mingled with amusement. . . . Employments were varied as much as possible. . . . He introduced in all the grades a nicely adjusted scheme of self-government." Religious education at its best was developed in his parish.

The building of a road to connect the almost inaccessible villages with the movements of life in the world outside was one of his unique community achievements. The people never had made roads, and were utterly indifferent to the project. He could get little or no help from his friends in Strasbourg to build roads as he had been able to do for his schools. Yet he knew the people must have roads. There was no encouragement to introduce new and improved methods of agriculture without them. The road to Rothau, on the highway to Strasbourg, was little more than a bypath and at times the little river Bruche could not be crossed. A safe road for all seasons meant a solid wall of stone of nearly a mile and a half along this little river with a permanent bridge at the foot of the hill.

He made known his plans to the people and then opposition was strong and even bitter. "The preacher was altogether out of his sphere"—thus his biographer voices their reaction of opposition. His place was to preach—roads and masonry were out of his line. "No, we will not have it. Our pastor may as well understand this now as ever." Such was their answer to his plea for community improvement and good roads. Sounds familiar to modern ears!

The wonder is that he didn't at this juncture offer his

resignation. But he was made of sterner stuff. *He knew that he was needed in this place. He had come to stay.* "The road must be made," he said. He gave their stubborn opposition careful consideration; and after he had preached on the Sabbath day with great earnestness, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God," the people beheld him early on Monday morning with pick on his shoulder and three or four others accompanying him go down out of the village to begin road-building. They saw him at work picking and shoveling, and the manhood in his people began to assert itself. *There was a revival of practical religion in the village.* The next day a score or so joined him, the next day fifty, and soon there were no doubters; all were on the band wagon for good roads. The biographer says: "Probably the last man to join the majority went home and told his wife that the original idea was his own, and he would have proposed it to Oberlin but for the conviction that ministers ought to confine themselves to the gospel and let the labor question alone." Country people are funny!

The demonstration of successful road-building was accomplished. Oberlin had proved himself a social engineer as well as a road builder.

Later, and from time to time, he introduced the scientific study of agriculture with lectures and practical experiments. He dealt with environment to change it and to make possible a realization of the ideals of life which he taught. He made his home a practical social settlement. One of the rules of his "Village Improvement Society," another of his sociological prophecies, was that "no lad should be received for confirmation without a certificate from his parents that he had

planted and cared for two trees in a suitable and designated place."

He welcomed whatever contributed to the public good, and the distinction of the "Legion of Honor" was conferred on him by Louis XVIII, "for services which he has rendered in his pastorate during fifty-three years, employing constant efforts for the amelioration of the people, for zeal in the establishment of schools and their methods of instruction, and the many branches of industry and advancement in agriculture and the improvement of roads."

In 1818 a report was made to the National Agricultural Society of Paris concerning Oberlin's work partly as follows: "We shall record this in the Memoirs of the Society as an admirable example of what the influence of an enlightened man can effect for the welfare of an entire region. What an instructive and interesting history is that of the prodigies accomplished in silence in this almost unknown corner of the Vosges! How delightful it is for us to know that France possesses in its ranks such a miracle of virtue! How consoling it is for us to think that this is not a dream of philanthropy, but that these are positive facts, and that imagination can add nothing to reality."

Oberlin was constantly preaching a Gospel of humanism and good will and saying to his people, "Think as brethren, feel as brethren, and all relations that you owe to the community and the community owes to you will be adjusted. All enduring social welfare must rest in Christian principles and in Christian practice."

Remember this was a mere country pastor. Any wonder that as we stood that Sunday evening by his tomb in Fouday, one of his villages, and placed a flower, that

we understood something of that sentiment which has led to the designation of this minister as *the Patron Saint of the Country Church*. A good minister of Jesus Christ—that he was. “A prophet, yea, more than a prophet.”

## CHAPTER V

### EVANGELISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THE question may easily arise as to whether evangelism has any special significance for the Country Church as such and as distinct from other types of churches. It is a fair question, and in all probability when methods are being considered it is only a matter of adaptation; and Country Churches themselves differ as widely as the poles with respect to just what procedure and what definite details will best meet the particular situation.

Country Churches in many places are slower to adopt and utilize approved methods and very often seem wedded to one custom or method, whereas "God fulfills Himself in many ways, lest one good custom corrupt the world." Our churches often need to get out of what is called a rut and to make use of talents and resources heretofore unrecognized, let alone unutilized. Some one has said that the only difference between a grave and a rut is that a rut is a grave with the ends knocked out. And, too, it is without doubt true that certain really pernicious notions of what constitutes Evangelism have become embedded in the consciousness of certain country regions and among local churches. The most persistent of these ideas which in time become a real detriment to the progress of the kingdom is the idea that regards the special series of meetings, the so-called pro-

tracted meeting—the revival service with its stress on emotionalism—as the only and sufficient evangelism.

But we will let the plans herein presented speak for themselves in the hope that a constructive, positive presentation may be most suggestive and helpful to pastors and churches who want to engage in the work of winning the entire community, where possible, to God, and who desire to enlist as many as possible in definite Christian tasks. Perhaps the best beginning is a consideration of *the evangelism of Jesus*.

Every idea and activity of Christians is ultimately to be checked up by the teaching and practice of Jesus. Methods to meet complex conditions of life not known when he was here upon earth are necessary, but his approach to individuals and communities and the glad tidings he brought are timeless and perennially inspiring.

His was a genuine *personal and whole-hearted interest in people*. He was not shackled by conventional terms and stereotyped methods. He loved people, and his frank, fulsome good will was ever alert to help and guide aright. He was sure of God, of human need, and of the value of the message and ministry he had to give. He could never have been suspected of professionalism or only official interest in those to whom he spoke or with whom he worked.

Jesus practiced *personal evangelism* and inspired those with whom he associated to do likewise. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men," was fulfilled in the case of his disciples. His example and invincible good will were delightfully contagious. Others caught the evangelistic spirit from him. Most communities need the type of Christian personality which breeds

faith and confidence in others. One such in some rural communities would literally redeem the community.

It is not necessary here to recount what is so frequently given in the Gospels, how Jesus addressed himself to the individual—sometimes to a leader of men, often to one whose social value had been largely lost.

He dealt personally with Peter and Andrew, with the Samaritan woman, the Centurion, the rich young ruler, and numerous others as opportunity presented.

But perhaps his greatest contribution to the philosophy and practice of Evangelism was in *the formation of an evangelistic band* or group of consecrated soul winners. He prayed, and selected the twelve. He trained and sent them forth. Out of the ordinary run of hearers and followers they were selected. However, they soon had enthusiasm for their work. They returned after one campaign rejoicing in the new power he had given them or perhaps helped them discover as already theirs.

When one considers the absolute newness of the gospel Jesus brought, the fact that it cut across current values and ways of estimating life, it is a marvel that he so soon transformed these men to his estimate of life and service.

Genuine evangelism to-day requires regard for the dispossessed and unendowed, concern for the backward element in the community, interest in health and welfare, consideration of ethical questions and practices which affect the morals and spiritual life of the people. It ought not to be especially difficult for a country minister to create out of his own faith, and under his own leadership, a group of sympathetic, patient workers for human welfare. He can carry forward the training



through the months, enlarging their vision and deepening their spirit, until they too by their spiritual energies "turn the community upside down."

Jesus did not undervalue organization either. He trained the seventy and sent them forth into all the villages round about with *a definite program*. When he fed the Five Thousand he bade his disciples cause the multitudes to sit down in rows, or as a literal translation would read, "in flower bed arrangement," so that the work of feeding them could be carried forward. Order, arrangement, system, program were not foreign to his thought and practice.

It would be a splendid thing during the special meetings so universally held in Country Churches to have a band of seventy, or less if so many are not available, to go in twos to every home and to every individual after the analogy of the Every-Member Canvass for finances, to present the claims of Christ and to urge attendance and confession in the public meeting. If there are five thousand people in the community, carefully organized personal work and visitation could find a way to bring the message personally to the attention of every one.

And what was His Evangel—His Message? It was the good news of the kingdom of God: a new saving, inspiring, hope-bringing relationship to God. "The kingdom of God is within you." You are to be the bearer of divine good will and the representative of God *where you are*. To individuals he doubtless did give warning of possible punishment, of impending disaster to those continuing in disobedience to God; but his gospel is a good word of emancipation, of divine indwelling and coöperation. "If a man love me, him will

my Father love, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." "He that believeth *hath* eternal life."

To get right with God is the way we sometimes express the emphasis of modern evangelism. This is not contrary to the call of Jesus which announced the supreme good of life as found in trust in God, the living of life as under God's eye and in his presence.

He also summoned men to get right with their fellow men. "Go, sell [continue to sell from time to time] that which thou hast, and give [form the practice of giving] to the poor" was his injunction to a rich young man who needed to be made socially minded. No evangel of God's infinite and continuous good will could grip this young man save in the process by which he came to have the mind of Christ himself. The saving of this young man would thus be a process. It must proceed along ethical and social lines and demonstrate genuine repentance by corresponding conduct. There are no more revealing words concerning Jesus than the following: "Who, being in the form of God [infinite wealth and privilege] thought it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, . . . becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This is the Apostle Paul's way of interpreting what Jesus was on earth to do. He was democratizing his own wonderful privilege. What a wonderful community builder he would be in the country!

Evangelism must win the strong and well-to-do to the same spirit and practice. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," is a matchless evangelistic message to the man lacking in public spirit, in good will and sense of

responsibility for his community. And the tragedy is that God cannot or rather does not save such a man until his heart is opened and he gets right with his neighbors.

Another element in the evangel of Jesus is His hope-bringing message of eternal life. The pathos of multitudes is that they have never learned to live a limitless or qualitative life. Many have not so much as heard down deep in the inner soul that there is such a thing as eternal life. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent—a life of spiritual quality lived in time here and now, under the eye and in the presence of the living God. This deep faith and experience transfigure life, exalt it, and give it infinite worth. This is the gospel. To establish this faith was the purpose of Jesus in his evangelism.

In the present-day Church most of the evangelistic efforts put forth are without plan or preparation. If a farmer should carry forward his work of trying to make the farm produce in an equally planless and unprepared way, failure would surely and deservedly await him. For the same reason failure awaits the spasmodic and unplanned efforts of a Church to produce new Christians.

The word "evangelism" stands for many and varied activities in the *process of establishing the kingdom of God on the earth and of getting people ready to fit where God is*. Evangelism may be said to be the primary business of God, in and through the Church. It therefore must not be relegated to spasmodic and occasional intensive effort, under the lead of a vocational evangelist or alleged specialist in this kind of

work. In the nature of the case it cannot be so relegated.

It may be entirely fitting and wise for the pastor and church to call in the assistance of a man who has a special aptitude in bringing to a climax a parish program of evangelism, and who is gifted in winning people to a definite decision for the Christian life. But in many communities the ultimate result of the total effort to win people to the Christian life would be far better if the church and pastor, with the possible assistance of a visiting pastor, were to conduct the campaign from the time of the beginnings of preparation, to its climax of receiving new converts into the membership and work of the Church.

In a community where one church has the full responsibility, the parish being coterminus with the neighborhood or community, the procedure is somewhat simplified of course. Where two or more churches share responsibility for a village and the surrounding country, coöperative effort is the ideal to be sought. Whatever difficulties may lie in the way of coöperation between churches in other activities, in the matter of evangelism there is almost always found a disposition to work together, and our successful experience at this point is greater than in any other kind of religious coöperation. By all means let the approach to the community be coordinated and in as full a measure as possible unified by a plan which will enlist the full powers of all the churches. Simultaneous meetings in the different churches are sometimes held.

When we use the word "parish," we usually mean the entire field that one church, with or without outstations in near-by neighborhood centers, is consciously

seeking to serve. This parish will almost always, because of our American way of promoting and administering Christian work, overlap the parish of some other church or churches. We might have entitled this discussion "Preparing for Community Evangelism," and had theoretical simplicity, but it is necessary to deal with actualities and to adapt ideal plans, or plans which would fit ideal conditions, to such conditions as we have.

In any case the field must be prepared. The minister has the major responsibility, but he should confer with the most spiritually minded of his church and community. *The Church should have an Evangelistic Committee as a first step in preparation for an evangelistic campaign.* If a community program of evangelism is undertaken, an Evangelistic Committee, a general Committee of Arrangements, made up of the pastor and two other representatives of each of the churches, or interlocking committees from each of the churches, should be carefully selected. Experience in a given community will guide in this matter. Ordinarily, the best plan would be to have a separate committee in each church with occasional conference and a unified plan. The responsibility rests upon the Church, and no church in the community, however small its membership and relative influence, should escape its share of responsibility. *Consecrated common sense, character, and personality, which give one influence, are indispensable requirements for membership on this committee.* Faddists and fanatics of all sorts must be left off, or their influence neutralized by the overpowering good sense of the others, or of some outstanding man who is a leader of the group. If Jesus felt the need of spending

all night in prayer before choosing the Twelve, how much more should the minister give deep thought and earnest prayer in the setting up of this Evangelistic Committee. There is a proverb which tersely says, "He that winneth souls is wise" (A. V.), "The wise win souls" (R. V.). The quality of wisdom—that is, insight into life, high regard for and love of people, conscientiousness, and devotion to truth—all this is necessary in those who are to represent Jesus Christ and the Church on this most important committee.

It will of course be necessary that this committee should read some of the best books and pamphlets available on Evangelism. Among these are: "Pastoral and Personal Evangelism," Goodell; "Taking Men Alive," Trumbull; "Method in Soul-Winning," Mabie; "Methods in Evangelism," Brown; "Introducing Men to Christ," Weatherford; "Every Church Its Own Evangelist," Edwards.

A program should be adopted after consideration of possible plans. The wise plan to adopt will depend somewhat upon local conditions, traditions, and the time of the beginning of a pastorate. The ideal, of course, is a plan adopted in the fall and looking forward through the Church Year, culminating at Easter preferably. Many open country Churches are compelled by custom and by the greater suitability of weather and road conditions to culminate their evangelistic efforts by holding the special meetings in the summer. The evangelistic program of the year can be adjusted to this situation, and the preparation and training of the Church be emphasized nevertheless. *The plan should include, unless the traditions of the community entirely disapprove, a series of special meetings held each evening*

*for a period of two or three weeks, at which time a message filled with concrete illustrations of the value of the Christian life, should be given.* This series of messages should present the personal relations and responsibilities of the individual to God and to his fellow men in the light of Christian revelation.

In preparation for any method of culminating the program, the evangelistic interest must be engendered in the total membership of the church by occasional sermon, address, and conference. Every other prayer meeting might well be made a conference meeting for this purpose. Of course, broad and comprehensive ideas and conceptions of what are meant by evangelism and the Christian appeal will need to be presented in these conferences to make them worth while. The challenge of Christ to the individual life—to its participation in the community and kingdom program—is the objective of any evangelistic plan.

Another step in preparing the parish is to *develop a parish consciousness on the part of the membership of the Church, especially of the Evangelistic Committee.* A map of the parish should be made, if one is not already in existence. All the roads leading out from the church, or the preaching points of the parish, should be carefully indicated on the map, and every household for which the church has any responsibility placed on the map. A list of "prospects," or persons available for the Christian life and membership in the Church, should be carefully prepared. It would include members of the Sunday school who are over ten years of age and are not yet members of the Church. There may be reasons for fixing the age even younger than ten years, but ordinarily the period at which children are prepared

for confirmation by the Liturgical Churches is the age below which a definite approach and appeal to the children for membership in the Church should not be urged. Attendants upon the church, members of the congregation, relatives of Church members not belonging to some other church, should be listed, and all non-Christian persons in the community who have not definitely expressed a preference for some other Church.

An analysis of this entire list should be made and a card catalogue, with any necessary notations, giving information which members of the Committee should have concerning the particular "prospect," shall be used. The names of children under sixteen might better be placed on a different colored card, because the approach to all such must be carefully studied, and made by those competent to present the claims of Christianity upon childhood and youth without psychological malpractice. There should be a card of one color for the near prospects or those whom the church is very likely to be able to win, and another color for remote prospects, or those less promising. In this classification there would be at least three different colored cards. The number of classes of prospects and of card colors is immaterial. The constructive idea is that there must be an intelligent and systematic approach made. It will be a surprise to most pastors and committees to learn how many genuine prospects there are for a church that has a right to represent the Gospel of Christ in a community. With this card catalogue of prospects in hand, the pastor and committee should decide upon the number that they feel in all reason they ought to be able to win by Easter time, or the culmination of the campaign, to a decision for Christ.



## CHAPTER VI

### EVANGELISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH (*Continued*)

THE New Testament point of view is that every believer in the New Testament Churches was an evangelizer and that the most potent method in evangelism was witnessing, and that the results were conserved by teaching converts "to observe all things."

This point of view, although assumed, needs to be inculcated through a publicity and propaganda campaign. It must become a conviction established in the thought of the Church and creating a conscience which grips every member. If any member of the Church fails to share the sense of responsibility for evangelism, to that degree the program will be incomplete. For the creation of this conscience on the part of the Church, the *pastor* is the one person responsible. Without an evangelistic pastor in the pulpit lay evangelism on the part of the pew is an impossibility. The pastor must accept responsibility to light and fan the flame of evangelism in the Church. The success in evangelism from the New Testament point of view is determined by the proportion of members in the Church filled with the spirit of evangelism and desiring to spread their faith.

Let us briefly review what has gone before so that, in our thinking, any previous partial presentation of a plan may be made fit. We have advocated a program of evangelism for the entire church year, roughly

divided into the period of general preparation in the fall, and of more intensive campaigning following the holidays, and culminating at the Easter season. The actual division of the year and the culminating period may be necessarily different in some country churches. The main point is to have a plan with a time for closing up the campaign. *It would be a splendid idea to have the church vote on some such plan and thus make it a definitely adopted part of the Church program, authorized and thus dignified.*

We have advocated an Evangelistic Committee to have charge of the entire campaign and to promote interest. We have advocated the development of a parish consciousness on the part of the membership of the Church, but especially the Evangelistic Committee, through the making of a community map. We have advocated a card catalogue of "prospects" with a view to a systematic and intelligent approach to those for whom the Church is responsible. In some churches the plan adopted includes the deciding upon a certain number to be sought as converts and new members. In one church where the writer recently spoke they had the slogan, "Fifty New Converts by Easter."

Special evangelistic meetings may be held at the time most opportune, led by a judicious vocational evangelist, or a pastor of special evangelistic gifts called in for the service.

All the foregoing can be adapted to a church of any size, but will, of course, require thought and careful attention. Placards indicating the fact that a campaign is being undertaken, indicating the personnel of the Evangelistic Committee, indicating books to be read or any other facts concerning the campaign which it is

desired to keep before the congregation, should be displayed in the vestibule and social rooms of the church.

If a plan covering the church year is adopted by the church, suitable announcement of the plan as a whole should be made in the local town and county papers. This might be done in the form of a display advertisement giving a few of the outstanding features of the year's plan and the objectives. The display advertisement should be supplemented by a news story or stories from time to time. If a special series of meetings is to be a feature at some time during the year, special announcement can be made in due time by a display advertisement, a window or roadside poster, together with news stories concerning the speaker, singer, or any special feature of the meetings.

The next point to consider is that of getting the membership of the Church actually at the job. Interest and enthusiasm can be generated by the adoption of a program of evangelism and frequent presentation of the matter to the Church. But *without organized effort* the interest and enthusiasm would fail to be effective. To get the entire Church, by vote or other committal, back of the program, is of course essential. In a Church which has been very successful in successive campaigns of evangelism adopted some years as a part of the annual program of the church, and renewed year by year, the membership has been carefully studied. On the occasion of the first study it was found that while the church had been organized to pay its bills, to finance building improvements, to conduct church socials, Sunday school work, young people's work, Missions, etc., *it had never been organized for an evangelistic campaign of long or short duration.*

## EVANGELISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH 63

This is a plan which has been actually worked over a series of years in a number of churches and is not mere theory.

It is not necessary to give details, but in the matter of utilization of the membership of the Church in the actual work the strength of the plan consists. Those who would consent or promise to do personal work should enroll in a Personal Workers' League for which the following Card of Enrollment was used:

### PERSONAL WORKERS' LEAGUE

A.....Church of B.....

#### IN TEN WEEKS' CAMPAIGN FOR 50 NEW MEMBERS FOR CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

*Believing the work of bringing men and women to Christ is  
a task laid on every Christian, I hereby*

Covenant with my God, my Church, and the Pastor,

*First*—To make an honest effort to win one soul to Christ  
and the Church.

*Second*—To win that soul before Easter.

(or other date).

*Third*—To work under assignment and in coöperation with  
the Pastor.

Agreeing to these three things, I hereby unite with the  
PERSONAL WORKERS' LEAGUE of A.....Church.

*Signed* .....

*Address* .....*Phone* ..... *Date*.....

This list of workers secured largely through the personal effort and solicitation of the Pastor was then studied carefully by the Pastor and the Evangelistic Committee in connection with the study of the constituency list or lists of "prospects." The training and development of these personal workers was made a part

of the inclusive program; but of course to assign the lists of prospects to that worker most likely to have influence and be able to achieve the result of bringing about a decision, was the chief consideration.

A similar League of Personal Workers is possible in a Church of any size and can be secured either with a pledge card similar to the foregoing, to be signed by all who are willing to be members of the League, or a pastor's list of workers secured by a personal interview. These constitute the League. The list of prospects should be carefully studied by the pastor and his Evangelistic Committee and then each prospect assigned to some member of the Personal Workers' League.

An information card for each prospect assigned to the Personal Worker was prepared as follows:

### PERSONAL WORKERS

#### Information Card

#### 50 NEW MEMBERS CAMPAIGN

A.....Church of B.....

*In compliance with your Workers' vow, will you earnestly endeavor to win to Christ and the Church*

Name .....

Address .....

Member Elsewhere.....

Never Made Profession.....

Other Information.....

Write all information you secure on reverse side of the card. Return this card to the Pastor, IMMEDIATELY following your first visit.

Do NOT show card to person you visit.

Worker .....

Date .....

These Information Cards are of course confidential, and upon the return of the card with notations the Pastor and the Evangelistic Committee determine what further is to be done. The Sunday upon which the cards are released to the Personal Workers is made the time for an announcement of the beginning of the intensive campaign. The workers have with them the Declaration Card which, when signed, is immediately returned to the pastor, who will follow up the declaration by personal call. It is of course understood that all of the personal workers who take cards have been carefully trained in the matter of the form of approach and the appeal to be made. Some reassignment of cards may be necessary from time to time, but every prospect is carefully visited, and the claims of the Christian life urged by some one supposed to have influence with that person.

If a series of special meetings has been planned to be held during the intensive campaign, opportunity for public profession on the part of those making the declaration can be arranged for; but at the Easter season, or on the Sunday on which the campaign culminates, all those who have made a declaration of faith should appear together at the church to be received according to the methods in use in the particular church. Of course in most country churches it will be best, if not indispensable, that those signing a Declaration Card be urged to go forward at the invitation during the special meetings and thus register publicly their confession.

## DECLARATION CARD

## FOR THOSE COMING BY CONFESSION

I hereby declare Jesus Christ as my Personal Saviour, and will serve Him to the end of my days.

I desire to become a member of the A.....Church of B....., and will present myself before the Membership Committee of the Church.

I will be present at the great Reception Day for New Members on Easter Sunday, April 8 (or other day arranged).

*Signed* .....  
*Date* ..... *Address* .....  
*Personal Worker* .....

**IMPORTANT**—Return this card to Pastor **IMMEDIATELY** following signature.

After the first organized campaign of evangelism has closed, the Church should be organized into groups, these groups to be a permanent part of the organization. The group plan of organization of the Church is devised for purposes of conservation and continuation.

The membership of the Church should be divided into groups of eight or ten, sometimes on a regional or neighborhood basis, but more often following the alphabetical lists. The head of the group should be carefully chosen because of tact and personal influence, and the ability which is in the membership of the Church should be distributed among the groups as far as possible. Deacons, Elders and Stewards should be among those who lead and supervise the work of these groups. Other apt and qualified leaders become material from which to choose these officers of the Church.

In this way every member of the Church is attached to some group of workers and all other features of the Church's program can be immediately brought to the knowledge of each member in the group by the group leader and an interest in the Church and its work developed. It is surprising how many personal workers can be developed in a plan of organized evangelism, carefully prearranged and thoroughly carried out, with power and influence in the community cumulative with each successive annual campaign.

We have discussed the idea of Evangelism as a permanent part of the year's program. Being the chief business of the Church, Evangelism should be consciously organized and definitely planned—the plan adopted by vote of the Church and carried through the entire Church year.

In the autumn the preparation of the churches is stressed and following the Christmas holidays more intensive effort is made, often accompanied by a prolonged series of evangelistic services held every night. Most churches prefer a series of special meetings continuing two or three weeks, or even longer.

It is needless to repeat that in the period of preparation the preaching of the pastor should frequently stress the obligation of Christian people to demonstrate and propagate their faith. Occasional sermons, pointed to the purpose, will help create an atmosphere in which it is easy to recommend one's faith to others, and in which it is easy for others, in whom desire has been quickened, to seek the Lord. Atmosphere is exceedingly important. Personal ambitions and manifestations of divisive selfishness on the part of individual members of a Church may destroy the climate so necessary in



evangelism. *The right climate will grow all kinds of coöperation and sacrificial service, and decisions for Christ.*

The ideal for a series of evangelistic meetings is for the pastor to do the preaching himself, or to exchange this service with a neighboring pastor, and so have and give the help and coöperation which often multiplies power.

It may seem presumptuous for any minister to suggest texts and outlines for others, but whenever it is done they must be regarded simply as suggestive. Often the experience of one will stimulate and help another. I therefore venture to present a few of the texts, subjects, and barest outlines of some of the sermons which I myself have preached, and would preach again in connection with an all-the-year evangelistic campaign. In some cases only the seed thought of the sermon—the idea in the text—will be given.

### SERMON ONE

“Break up your fallow ground.” (Hos. x. 12.)

*Int.* Hosea, the farmer prophet, often used figures taken from country life. Here he is appealing to Israel to make use of undeveloped powers and possibilities. Get the whole farm under cultivation. Produce to capacity.

*Discussion.* Fallow may be used in either of two senses—ground purposely allowed to rest and therefore partly or wholly unproductive; or ground idle because of laziness or lack of will. In both cases such fallow ground may, in addition to being useless, become dangerous as a producer of weeds that blow across upon

good and cultivated ground. The challenge of the text is to organize and systematize one's moral and spiritual development.

*Ills.* From the development of scientific agriculture—see Carver's "Principles of Rural Economics." Work in analogous passages—*e. g.*, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," which from the context teaches that the good which is sown produces good results just as much as does evil that is sown produces evil results. Characteristics and spiritual qualities desired in the Christian life may here be discussed.

## SERMON TWO

"We are a colony of heaven." (Phil. iii. 20.)

Read this text in as many versions and translations as are available. It really means that a Christian Church is a small community of heaven, set up in the larger community for the purpose of leavening the whole.

Discuss Roman Colonial Policy: Philippi, a Roman colony for the purposes of trade and administration. A colony is a settlement of subjects of a sovereign power where a frontier is to be guarded or civilization interpreted. It is founded either providentially or for a definite purpose. Touch upon the local church history. Show how it was providentially founded to be a point of contact of the kingdom of God with the community or neighborhood. A colony has relations to the mother country of loyalty and service. It is to disseminate new ideas, to be an interpreter of the true order. A Church is to demonstrate in the community what Christian life is and what the heavenly disposition and character

## 70 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

require in all community relationships. Poor in spirit; meek; merciful; pure in heart; peacemakers; moral strivers. The real objective of the Church is to bring an answer to the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come; make earth like heaven."

### SERMON THREE

"Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?" (Psa. lxxxv. 6).

*Int.* Discuss historical occasion. Cf. Habakkuk iii.

2. We speak of a revival of trade. We also speak of a revival of religion.

*Discussion.* When do we need a revival of religion?

When Christians do not fully love one another.

When there is any just cause of reproach given to those who are not "of us."

When there are large numbers of merely nominal Christians in a congregation who are unwilling to unite with the Church and assume its obligations. (Discuss halfway covenant.)

When people are encouraged to think they are good enough.

When they have not fully accepted Christ and his Lordship.

When there is no deep interest on the part of the Church in the Sunday school and in religious instruction in the home.

## EVANGELISM AND THE COUNTRY CHURCH 71

### FURTHER TEXTS AND SUBJECTS FOR USE AS EVANGELISTIC SERMONS OF PREPARATION

1. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." (John xvii. 18.)

Commissioned by Christ. Ambassadors of spiritual life.

2. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." (John xv. 16.)

Subject: Election for service the only doctrine of election in the Bible.

Abraham, Jacob, Isaiah, the prophets, Saul, Barnabas—all were elected for some special service.

3. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." (2 Chron. vii. 14.)

A special covenant for the Country Church.

4. "The people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." (Dan. xi. 32.)

Develop this text with the background and story of the Maccabees and their wonderful achievements.

5. "Ye are the salt of the earth . . . Ye are the light of the world. (Matt. v. 13, 14.)

Christians as conservers of spiritual achievements and as the torchbearers of moral and spiritual progress.

The following texts and subjects may be made the basis for presenting the challenge of the gospel to the non-Christian, or to those who have not yet identified

themselves definitely with the life and program of the Church. They are of the type usually thought of as evangelistic.

1. "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. (Num. x. 29.)

Moses challenged Hobab to use His talents in the service of God and civilization, and to share in the fruitage of the common achievements of God's people. Tell the story of Israel's journeyings and the value of such experience as Hobab and the Kenites could bring into the service of God and civilization at that time.

2. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Rom. x. 8, 9.)

There is in every life enough light, if followed to lead into the full light of God. Conscience and a sense of right assent to and confirm the true message of the gospel. The light within corresponds to the light from without. No need of spectacular miracle (ascending into heaven), or of scientific demonstration (descending into the abyss). Follow the gleam. This text is a wonderful encouragement to those who preach the gospel, for it indicates that the best self within every person is an ally of the preacher. People may be exhorted to give their best self a chance—not to wait for perfect explanation and assurance. "Run on anything."

3. "He hath set eternity in their heart." (Eccles. iii. 11.)

Man's moral capacity for good. Augustine says: "O God, Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in Thee."

Man's spiritual capacity is wonderful, but it is only developed as it is touched by the presence of the living God.

"In my own heart beats an eternity.  
No mirage towers of dreamlands yet to be;  
But once I stooped to taste an upland spring,  
And, bending, heard it murmur of its sea.  
I shape it not in perishable clay,  
Nor muse on dreams and hope to make them stay;  
But as the patient shell secretes its pearl,  
So I secrete my heaven from day to day."

4. "Gallio cared for none of these things." (Acts xviii. 17.)

Indifference to religion. Prejudice or a fixed false idea can destroy interest in religion, although religion is native to the normal soul. Man is incurably religious. The object of this sermon is to help intellectuals to overcome their indifference to religion, often generated by extravagances and false emphasis of good Christian people.

5. "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. xii. 5.)

Moral shortcomings or moral inadequacy. A frank examination of the position of certain types of people in the community, who have made little or no use of religion in the life process.

6. "The hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (Isa. xxviii. 17.)

The futility of excuses. When Jordan overflows in the time of the spring freshets animals seeking refuge in crevices and clefts are compelled to flee for their very lives. The moral hiding places of weak and inept personalities are searched out by the crises of life.

Some excuses which will be swept away are: "I don't feel like being a Christian." "I am good enough." "I cannot believe everything in the Bible." "I believe the Bible: isn't that enough?" "I am not good enough to be a Christian." "There are hypocrites in the Church." "I never could be as good as Brother —."

7. "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." (Matt. xi. 29.)

The authority and service of Jesus with all that it means for life.

Can be presented in the form of an invitation and an appeal.

8. "I show unto you a more excellent way." (1 Cor. xii. 31.)

A discussion of Christian manner of life under the analogy of a road.

*Ills.* The Indian manner of speech: The "Jesus Road." -

Discuss good roads—their utility—incidentally.

9. "Consider Christ." (Heb. iii. 1.)

A consideration of some of the appreciations of Jesus. The four pictures of him in the four Gospels: Mark, the wonder worker; Matthew, the fulfiller; Luke, the Great Philanthropist; John, the Way, Truth, and Life. Paul's conception of Christ as the "Life-giving

Spirit." The appreciation of Christ in Hebrews as the Founder of a stable and satisfying religion.

10. "Why I became and why I remain a Christian."

Give the story of your own faith, the factors in your early life leading you to accept Christianity and to continue in the Christian life.



## CHAPTER VII

### OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

#### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

IN the chapters on "Objectives and Program," and "Administration, Organization, and Finances," we are endeavoring to show that the inclusive aims and objectives of a Church should be kept clearly in mind by the entire membership as far as possible: that the definite program of activities logically issues out of a survey or study of conditions, and that Evangelism, Missions, Religious Education, and Community Service are the usual major divisions of a program. We of course are remembering that worship—dignified, regular, reverent, and soul-satisfying—will underlie the spiritual service of any church in a community.

Evangelism has been discussed separately in previous chapters; but in an inclusive church plan and program it is to be geared into its proper place and relation, and administered properly by special committees or organizations. Religious Education also is usually committed entirely to the one organization, the Church School, although Women's Societies and Young People's Societies often do some educational work. *The Church is the inclusive organization.* All activities of any subsidiary organization are to be thought of as the Church working in and through such organization. The organization and administration of the Church are

devised to carry out the program and to be changed and adapted to secure the Church's objectives and the program of activities. The financial budget is to meet the needs of the program and is to provide for worship, administration, a program of Evangelism, Religious Education, and Community Service. It is seen that organizations overlap and interlock, and in the present stage of development of the organized Church, which is taking the place of the earlier unorganized Church, much pioneering and experimenting still needs to be done.

The functions of a Church and the purpose for which it exists have been briefly discussed in another place. The definite aims and plans of the Church need now to be more particularly discussed.

Few pastors of Country Churches and a smaller percentage of officers of Churches could express in anything more than the most general terms what the objectives of the Church are for the year, and then tell the program of work it is committed to try to do.

We are using the term "objectives" as the more general, and the term "program" as the more definite, statement of the task the Church has set itself. It would be the ideal thing and altogether feasible if the pastor and Church officers would spend enough time in conference together to formulate a statement of objectives, and then arrange for these to be attractively printed and a copy put in the hands of every member of the Church and congregation. It might be well also to print with this statement, or separately, the exact program of events, activities, and kinds of service the Church proposes to render, or is rendering, to achieve a degree of realization of these objectives. In any case,

both objectives and program should be printed and made available for reference in informing, training, and educating the Church in its task.

Some analysts of Church activities would proceed at once to set forth a standard program without giving consideration to objectives; but in thinking through just what the Church is aiming to do and how it is to do it, it seems logical to formulate a statement of objectives as a preliminary task.

1. *To generate or develop a living faith in God and in our fellowmen*—that is, to develop a reverent attitude and an ethical life. This is sometimes called the spiritual and moral work of the Church and is in some respects the end sought, while in others the spirit and motive seeks to secure other worthy ends. Unless the Church is able to create a right attitude toward God and toward man, in the minds and hearts of many, if not all of the people of the community, the best life for the community will be possible. Respect for God and good men, and for all noble and true things, must be generated. This development depends very largely upon the atmosphere found in home and school and church, and it will register in all the relationships of the community.

2. *To develop knowledge*, first of the Bible, then of the history and achievements of Christianity, of denominational interests and enterprises, of the working conditions in the community and in the world at large, of general culture and human attainments.

A worthy view and grasp of what the Bible is, how it came into being, its nature as a progressive and unfolding revelation of God's will and workings in the world as a book of *life* rather than of *texts*, the Church

should seek to establish. All this worked into the experience of a goodly portion of the Church and community will result in a stability for the Church, sanity of thought and life, devotion to ideals and sacrificial service. The redeeming God's expression of himself in the Book of our religion was first of all in the hearts of the men and the nation through which he has spoken.

An ideal for the New Testament would be that every well-informed Christian know the earthly career and teachings of Christ in the fourfold presentation in the Gospels, and the outworking of his spirit in the founding and disciplining of the early Church. Many of the bizarre and mongrel types of religious thought and behavior which infest some of the rural regions, in the form of Holy Rollers and the like, would retire before more accurate and balanced knowledge of the Bible, and of normal Christian faith and practice.

Office bearers in some of the lodges memorize great sections of the ritual and also commit to memory the lectures in the ritual. Teachers and office bearers in the Church could easily do much more to master in an understanding way the basic truths of Christianity. It would seem best to avoid controversy except where it is utterly unavoidable. The Church should preach and teach the truth *and let it work*.

To know Christianity as a force to-day for righteousness it is well-nigh a necessity to know it in its history. Knowledge of the genius and achievements of one's own local Church, his denomination, and the Church at large has great value in the building up of character and usefulness in the world.

The present interests, plans, and work under way of one's own denomination give a sense of regimentation

in a worthy enterprise and furnish morale. The local Church should coöperate with Boards and general agencies in informing its members.

The specific conditions of economic and industrial life which affect the happiness and well-being of the community and reach into the Church for good or evil should be known to the Church leadership, and this knowledge should be socialized and made the possession of all as far as possible. For example: A church cannot serve a mill village people without sympathetic knowledge on the part of the Church—its leaders especially—of the problems which the people face. The same holds good for any special type of agriculture on its productive and business sides.

The Church should promote the largest culture because the more abundant life is thereby possible. Its promising young people must have opportunity for higher education, and the general level of culture can be raised in a few short years by the Church. Our duty as a Church is to face human problems, get the facts and think them through, then do what needs to be done.

3. *To develop wholesome recreation, amusements, and social life.* When we come to a discussion of program, more definite statements can be made as to how this may be achieved, but to state it as an objective, to get the problem into the consciousness of the Church, is a crying need. Supervised play and games are among the finest methods of character-building. Leisure is a blessing, but also a temptation, and the wise or unwise use of leisure may make or break a life. The spirit of play is the thrill and enjoyment of living, and in play God can often best teach us how to live together.

Imagination is stirred in the kinds of play and dramatic presentations now so easily possible to the young people of any Church, and often latent powers are wonderfully developed. Wholesome amusement and educational recreation, social occasions and opportunities, furnish a "use of the margin" or leisure time which at least is not demoralizing, as commercialized amusements so often are, and at their best this use of leisure will be useful and elevating.

The Church can afford to spend much of its energy to guide the amusements of its young people, to coöperate to make life less lonesome and isolated. Evangelism and Religious Education are on a par and not a whit above these other objectives, so often classed as non-religious or irreligious.

4. *To develop health and healthy-mindedness.* Some agency or agencies in the community should be ever on the alert promoting good health habits and knowledge of life processes. Sanitary and hygienic home life and dietary knowledge can be provided to a far greater degree by just a little help.

The individual's health is affected by community conditions. An excess of flies may mean widespread disease. All the people need some information and training in health habits, especially women and children. Handicapped persons must be cared for, but preventive measures are better than remedies.

The coöperation of the Church rather than its leadership is what is most needed in such matters, but it must not be allowed to go by default.

5. *To develop right social relations.* In this regard the home is a vital factor, and thinking unselfishly for others must begin to be taught there.

Good citizenship and respect for law and the regulations by which our complex life is made possible must be engendered. To extend the fellowship of the Church to people lowly and unrecognized, and plan ways by which they may be helped, will assure the strengthening of the Church in other matters. To mediate between conflicting interests and parties rather than to take sides in labor or other forms of controversy should be the policy of the Church as such. The promotion of sympathetic understanding of conditions and needs in all lands and putting of the influence of the Church on the side of world peace and international justice and brotherhood is a need of the present.

The Church must work with and influence other groups and other organizations in the community. Coöperation is one phase of the true expression of Christianity. Our attitude toward our fellow men and concern for their welfare will be a test of the reality of our Christianity.

6. *To develop life enlistment and vocational fitness.* Leaders in the Church and Sunday school can do much to discover the talent latent in the youth of the community and bring about enlistment for some worthy life calling, whether a religious or so-called secular calling, in the name of Christ and the kingdom of God. Encouragement to prepare for the largest service possible must be given, ambitions stirred, and obstacles mastered. Business integrity and efficiency are a profound concern of the Church. Christian ideals must be embodied, not only in the work of the minister and missionary, but in the banker and lawyer, and every vocation. Life itself presents a challenge to Christian people in all the occupations. Our women's missionary organizations are be-

coming properly zealous to prepare and provide literature and study courses to stimulate intelligent and wise choice of a life work. If the Church could mobilize and utilize all its talents in definite Christian conduct in all kinds of vocational life, it would be a big step toward the establishing of the kingdom of God.

7. *To develop intelligent decisions for Christ and Church membership.* To induce people to turn away from a sinful and unworthy way of life and make a personal, whole-hearted commitment of the life to follow Christ is the essence of Evangelism. An understanding of the privileges and responsibilities of Church membership so that the Church is the leader and inspirer of the whole program of life is what should be sought.

In a measurably successful achievement of these objectives the Church demonstrates the validity of its claims to be the servant of God and of human welfare.

It has now become perfectly obvious that in many respects all Churches are alike and that some of the program of activities will be the same for practically all Churches. Part of the procedure in utilizing the resources of a Country Church and doing the work which is possible in that particular field is predetermined by conditions which are only slightly modifiable. Multitudes of Country Churches can only arrange to have part of the time of a minister and must share his services with one or more other points on a circuit or larger parish, and the local single point of service is thus limited in its possible program of public worship and church meetings at least. It is all very well to state an ideal of "at least one service of worship every Sunday"; but on some charges that is at present and perhaps



permanently impracticable, if the service of worship is to require the presence of an ordained minister.

All matters of arranging what points are to be included under the care of one pastor and the distribution of his time and energies among these different churches should be made a matter of careful study by denominational administrators or Boards in coöperation with the Churches, and from time to time restudied with a view to the greatest possible economy and efficiency in using our supply of ministerial leadership. The greatest country preacher of all history, John Frederick Oberlin, ministered to a village and four outlying districts. Manifestly it was impossible to have even one service of worship in each place every Sunday, but Oberlin ministered to the entire area and to all souls in the parish.

It is true that lay leaders and lay preachers could be utilized in many of these places, and perhaps one of the most needed things in the program of an extended circuit of churches and preaching points is the development of lay preachers and leaders. Methodism made wonderful progress in the pioneer days of the itinerant preacher by utilizing as class leaders laymen who held the little group together in the interim of the minister's visits.

We must now try to be as definite as experience and bewildering variety of life's tastes and inclinations will allow, in setting forth a program for the Country Church. "A program is a plan for the progression of *events* for the purpose of definite accomplishments." No great business or manufacturing or engineering undertaking is begun without a program. The school has a program. The church services follow a program

or order of service, and the year's activities of a church should proceed according to a program—an inclusive one.

Some parts of a Church program cover work to be done or sought to be done in a given season or period; other parts have to do with work to be achieved in a longer period. All parts of the program should be definite and constructive; that is, they should fit together and follow the purpose or seek to realize the objective for which they have been adopted. That every part of the program should be practicable and within the powers and resources of the Church goes without saying.

In order to utilize the resources of the Church and community most advantageously this program should be thought through and visualized by one or more of the leaders *and then "sold" to enough of the Church to guarantee its support and a high degree of success in its outworkings.*

The first thing in order in determining a Church program—indeed, logically, the first step of the program is a careful study of the entire situation—or a survey, to use an overworked term.

The survey is a term borrowed from civil engineers. A piece of land is studied superficially and topographically to determine boundaries, possible uses, etc. It is mapped out and described with such specifications as one would need to have in estimating its value and availability for certain uses. The term easily passes on to apply to a study of possible routes and profiles for roads, rail and vehicular, and foolish indeed would that corporation be that projected a railroad or a system of highways without adequate surveys. And from time to

time, as resources increase and need arises, railroads are straightened out and difficult grades eliminated and other needful changes effected by additional studies or surveys.

By analogy, but almost inevitably, the word "survey" is applied to a study of soils to ascertain chemical conditions, extent of kinds, fertility, etc. It has been essential to make extensive soil surveys in order to redeem American agriculture from "rule of thumb" methods. A farmer is one who plows, plants, cultivates, and harvests crops. He also raises animals and is something of a breeder of stock. True, those activities are everywhere the stereotyped work of the farmer, but soils differ; the deepness of good plowing differs, the kind of seed best adapted differs; time of planting, extent and methods of cultivating, time for harvesting—all differ in different parts of the country, and careful study or survey of conditions is essential to scientific farming.

The survey as applied to social conditions and the work of human institutions is *simply the extension of wide-awake, common sense methods of knowing what one is about in a given situation*. It is an attempt to make scientific what has heretofore been slipshod or rule of thumb in method.

The survey which a Church should make of and for its field should include: (a) a careful study of all conditions which affect its work and which can be modified for the better by its ministry, and (b) it should include a search for the best methods and forms of organization and work found to be successful under the same or similar conditions. This survey should be *fairly complete, should be a matter of record, should be revised from time to time, should be cumulative*, and at the

beginning of any year, fiscal or calendar, when the Church starts out on a period of planning and service, the survey should be the basis for an intelligent determination of the things the Church undertakes to do—should be the foundation of all the rest of the program.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH (Continued)

#### THE SURVEY

To present the matter of survey in further detail: the survey should secure information and facts in regard to the following matters:

1. It should be clear to a Church just what other Churches and religious agencies are present and minister to the community, and as far as possible the value and extent of their ministry.

2. The names of all persons, their religious affiliations and preferences, should be listed together with their spiritual and intellectual condition as far as possible. This knowledge is often called a religious census, and sometimes the securing of this information, usually from home-to-home visitation, is called the survey, and the idea of the survey begins and ends with this. This is as useful a collection of facts as a church and pastor can have, but it is not all of a survey.

Under those conditions which affect the work of the Church and which can be modified by the ministry of the Church, and of which the Church should have accurate knowledge, most certainly we should include also the following facts:

3. A knowledge of the reach of the influence of the

Church. How far do people come to attend the church services and what is the attendance at the different services? A map of the parish should be provided indicating all roads and locating all buildings, such as churches, schoolhouses, halls, etc. The boundary of this parish should be carefully determined upon by taking into consideration the nearest church of the same faith, and by placing a dot on the map for all members, and a different color dot for all attendants. This map should be brought up to date at least quarterly.

4. A knowledge of the intellectual life of the Church and community. It is not difficult to secure school statistics and compare them with normal communities. The number of college and high school graduates, the nature of the reading and cultural habits of the people, can and ought to be a matter of certain knowledge.

5. The pleasures of the people—that is, their attendance upon places of amusement and such places as they frequent for relaxation and entertainment, both commercial and casual—should be known with enough accuracy to remove all guesswork and nothing be taken for granted. The number and value of such institutions as dance halls, pavilions, bathing beaches, or other public resorts, and intimate knowledge of the moral atmosphere and influence of these places, should be secured and made a matter of record. The number of movies and the attendance they are able to secure of those for whom the Church is responsible, may greatly determine the kind and extent of the program of the Church to supplement or displace some of these influences.

6. The social life of the people as indicated by the number and nature of the clubs and parties which meet with more or less frequency and regularity. In a cer-

tain country village there now exist rook and bridge and mah jong clubs or groups which meet rather regularly. What athletic teams exist and what athletic events are held is also of vital importance, as athletics and other active recreation on the part of the young people is becoming—in fact, has long been—a concern of the Church, and is an avenue to service of a most significant sort.

The number and nature of the fraternal orders and lodges which supply the community with a part of its social life and consumes a part of its leisure should be carefully listed, with membership and attendance analyzed to determine their grip on the time and attention of the community, and the degree of service they render.

7. The home life of the community should be studied. As far as possible the whole set of questions involved in the rather indefinite conception of home atmosphere should be explored. The influence of home life on the young; the attitudes of parents to the activities of their children; the extent to which the home supplements the religious instruction of Church and Sunday school—all the facts that determine the degree of satisfaction that the home life furnishes to its members are of great significance.

8. The health of the community should be studied to such an extent as to disclose any pronounced shortages as compared with normal communities. The health conditions of boys and girls, of men and women, should be matters of separate inquiry and causes ascertained as far as possible.

9. The business interests and vocations of the people should be listed and analyzed. What economic organizations are to be found, and their purpose, organization,

and achievements in all respects that affect the prosperity of the people should be known. If there is a Grange or other farmers' socio-economic organization, it would be well for the pastor or representative of the Church to belong and coöperate and know accurately the true value of such an organization. Snap judgments are of course to be avoided, and careful study made.

In a certain country community a Grange building stood side by side with the church building. Both properties were in excellent condition, but inquiry disclosed that a feud existed between the Church (rather the pastor and a few of the Church members) and the Grange. He had judged and condemned the organization for holding Saturday night dances and the entire program of the Grange was therefore anathema to him. The Saturday night dance probably was a bad influence in the community, all things considered; but the wise plan would have been to make a careful study of its influence, and at the same time to study the influence of the other activities of the Grange and get facts. Then a conference between the Grange leaders and the Church leaders, who under usual conditions would be some of the same individuals, should have been held. This conference ought to have been able to come to a decision as to what ought to be done in the light of community needs—moral, social, and economic.

But a further discussion of this type of procedure would fall under the Program for Community Service.

In some sections farmers' coöperative enterprises of a politico-economic character are arising. The value, scope, and objectives of these organizations should be most carefully studied. The Church whose membership so often interlocks with the membership of these organ-



izations may want to influence such organizations to make them of most help and to keep them true to ethical ideals and practices. Here again nothing should be taken for granted.

10. Any special conditions or influences that affect the life and ministry of the Church should be looked into carefully—such questions as the presence of many summer boarders or guests, migratory laborers, students in high schools or academies or other types of schools; the presence of racial groups of other religion and social traditions than those dominating the Church; any factor the subtle operation of which may affect slow but radical changes in the future in the Church or community. For example, if the statement has been made that “all of our young people are leaving” to go to the city or to some industrial center, that statement could be verified or certified by a careful assembling of the facts over a period long enough to be of real value in determining what, if anything, the Church should do about it. When the facts are assembled and causes ascertained, a part of the program of the pastor and Church might be to help change the emphasis in the teaching in the schools—help put the advantages and opportunities of rural life before these young people in some definite way. In any case, whatever is done or not done should be a result of definite knowledge of needs and conditions.

Enough has been presented to show that the first step in making an inclusive program for the local church—indeed the basis for all the rest of the program—is a careful, continuous, cumulative study of the entire situation to ascertain what needs to be done and the resources available to do it or any part of it.

A good text with which to set forth the value of a survey and program for the Church is Philippians iv. 11: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." The King James Version does not release the meaning; indeed, it so obscures it as to seem to teach the very opposite of the true meaning. The Apostle does not mean that he accepts complacently and resignedly a state of things too much for him. Another version reads: "I have learned, in whatsoever condition I find myself, *to meet the situation.*" Ah, that is it! "To meet the situation." To study and analyze the situation and then meet it!

Growing out of the survey of course will be four standard divisions of a program, Evangelism, Missions, Religious Education, Community Service, divided and detailed according to ascertained conditions.

1. Evangelism we have discussed at length in a chapter by itself, and strongly contend for a planned and administered program running practically through the year. All other parts of the inclusive program of activities can be and should be geared into the evangelistic year, and all adapted to contribute one to the other.

2. Missions. The entire task which falls under this head is usually confined to the efforts at Church extension and propaganda which are administered by National, State, or District Boards, with funds contributed by the churches and pooled in the larger efforts and projects on foreign fields or specially needy types of home or domestic Church extension work.

The gathering of funds by pledged gifts, or amounts raised in special offerings of various sorts, usually exhausts the missionary efforts of the local Church.

In most communities, as a part of the inclusive evan-

gelistic plan, it is possible for the Church to do real missionary work in some "no-man's land," or neighborhood adjoining the parish, or with some group; as, for example, an immigrant group.

Education of the Church in Missions has usually fallen to the Woman's Missionary Society, and they should be encouraged in their work. The various age and sex groups that they have organized in most of the larger denominations should have their organization and program coördinated properly with organized classes in the Sunday school and with the young people's organizations in order to prevent confusion and unnecessary duplication.

3. Religious Education programs have received a very large share of the interest of the Church in recent years. Courses in teacher-training, books and pamphlets dealing with all the problems of the Sunday school, or Bible School or Church School as it is variously designated, are provided by the denominational Sunday School Boards.

The scope of Religious Education is broadening and newer methods and devices are being introduced. The alert pastor will avail himself of all the helps possible to lead in proficient work in this field. Institutes and Pastors' Schools provide separate courses under this head.

4. Community Service. (a) What does the community need done that the Church as an organization can directly do? (b) What does it need to have done which members of the Church as individuals or leaders in other groups can do? (c) What needs to be done through the creation of agencies other than the Church to do it? (d) In what ways can the Church coöperate

with existing agencies and forces to do things manifestly not the exclusive function of the Church?

These questions should have been answered in part at least by the survey, and experimentation and demonstration will develop ways and means better adapted, or will disclose better approaches and methods. Things are not settled in this great department of Church work, but new wisdom to devise means and other paths of service are constantly being disclosed. Standard and stereotyped activities under this head are not as easily decided upon as under either of the other three major heads.

Churches are too often limited in this field of service by inadequate equipment and facilities, personnel and finance. But whatever ought to be undertaken, can be undertaken, and if undertaken, should be financed in the budget of the Church if possible, or taken care of in special ways.

The Committee on Community Service, with the pastor of course an ex-officio member and adviser, should work out a reasonable program of community service—subject to the approval of the Advisory Board. The execution of this program falls primarily on this committee, but can be delegated to the different groups and auxiliary organizations.

Women, or men for that matter, who belong to and are active in welfare organizations of all sorts should be listed as the community service group or committee and their service performed in the name of the Church. It has been estimated that seventy-five per cent of all community service is done by Church people. Why should not the Church consciously recognize this? Directly and through its own organizations the Church

can plan a series of social and recreational activities for its own members and the entire community; thus throughout the year rendering recurring service.

A sample of this sort of all-the-year program, suggestive for other Churches, has been worked out by Mr. Clive McGuire in "A Community Service Program for Town and Country Churches." \* We reproduce a considerable portion of Mr. McGuire's all-the-year-plan to indicate what a wide-awake Church either directly or through its auxiliary organizations and groups can do for the community, especially the young people.

Church and community rub elbows and establish relationships with each other whether they will or not. Consciously or unconsciously, the Church is determining what these relationships shall be, and it is to the mutual advantage of Church and community that the Church do this *consciously*. This idea must have been in Jesus's mind when he referred to his followers as "salt," "leaven," and "light," and is borne out in his own terse declaration, "I came that *they* may have life." Carrying out the purpose of this declaration, he made his contacts with men count to their benefit.

When we attempt to align our Church life with this spirit, we face certain alternatives. Shall our Churches be *giving* or *getting* Churches? Shall they *minister* to the community or be *ministered unto*? Shall they *absorb* or *radiate* community life? Shall they contribute or collect tribute? The Church certainly has no alternative but to make community life Christian, and there is solemn and silencing truth in the statement of Dr. Washington Gladden that "you can judge a Church by the community in which it works."

The term "community life" reduces the possible field of the Church's influence to its lowest denominator. The day-in-and-day-out life of any community includes business, politics, education, recreation, and religion. These particulars indicate

\* "A Community Service Program for Town and Country Churches," by Clive McGuire. American Baptist Home Mission Society, New York.

phases but not departments of community life, and they are all lived at once. All are essential to the individual and collective well-being. No one of them can be developed separately and apart from the rest.

### WHO LEADS THE COMMUNITY?

The type of community life is determined by the character of its leadership. Who shall lead? Who shall set the pace? To whose program shall the regular community life be conformed? If the Christian forces do not determine the community type, what forces shall do it? The answer is inevitable. *If Christ, through his followers, does not lead the community, his enemies will.*

The Church may project the spirit of the living Church into every phase of community life and is under obligation to do so. Therefore, the Church can no more ignore business or politics, or play or education, than it can ignore religion, for life embraces them all. The purpose of the following program is to furnish suggestions for the guidance of the Church that desires to enter its legitimate and God-appointed field—the leadership of all community life. It is given not because of its completeness or sufficiency for the Churches' purpose, but merely as suggestions that have grown out of ten years of personal effort to make Christ the leading factor in community life.

Much of the community work in which the Church is interested will be undertaken directly by other agencies and the attitude of the Church will be that of friendly moral support. The Church must avoid any infringement upon the field of the school, grange, farm bureau, or any other agency doing useful community work, but it must be ever on the alert to guide and assist these agencies in their proper community functioning. Other activities it will promote directly, being the only agency in the community properly prepared to undertake them. It is safe to say that the Church should not render directly any service that can be rendered equally well by some other agency. There are times, however, when it is necessary for the Church to call to the attention of other

## 98 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

agencies certain pieces or fields of service that those agencies have for any reason been neglecting.

### WHEN TO BEGIN

Such programs are best launched in the early fall in most rural communities. It is a month of transition. Schools are opening; crops are out of the way; the Church is ready for a new year's work and able more easily to adapt itself to new types of service. Although September is the proposed starting time, it is quite apparent that with minor changes the program given here may be used regardless of the starting time.

*Note:* The items listed here do not constitute a program, but are rather material from which a program can be drawn. Any Church attempting to crowd all these suggestions into its community program the first year would find the program hopelessly overloaded.

### SEPTEMBER

#### *Keeping Fit Campaign*

The Departments of Health, State and National, are endeavoring continually to disseminate health knowledge. At present the effort is taking the form of a campaign of sex instruction for young men and young women. The material furnished to any community applying for it consists of reels of motion pictures, a large list of splendid lantern slides, well illustrated charts, and pamphlets of instruction for general distribution. This is especially acceptable in the early fall in the high school, where preparation for the football season makes the idea of physical fitness a live one. The American Social Hygiene Association, 105 West 40th Street, New York, furnishes a series of charts and suggested lectures on venereal disease. The instruction is graded to meet the needs of the various groups of the community.

#### *Club Work*

The instinctive desire of the boys and girls for organizations that they can call their own must be met. The value of group work depends entirely upon the persons leading it. The

Churches' neglect in this regard is hinted at in the report of the recent Church survey in twenty counties in Ohio, in the Churches of which were found 1,025 organizations within the churches, of which number 52 were for girls and only 26 for boys. The leaders must proceed in the light of the best information they can get, as it is possible to work over a community and do great damage by starting in the wrong way. The program for the entire year will be easily promoted if the boys and girls are grouped for it. Among the organizations ready to assist in any community in a program of group work for boys and girls are: The Y. M. C. A.; the Y. W. C. A., 600 Lexington Avenue, New York; the Boy Scouts, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York; Camp Fire Girls, 31 East Seventeenth Street, New York; Girl Scouts, 189 Lexington Avenue, New York; Woodcraft League (with a program for all ages), 13 West Twenty-ninth Street, New York; and the department of boys' and girls' club work at the State Agricultural College. In the organization of clubs for girls special reference should be made to the manual entitled "Girls' Clubs," by Helen J. Ferris, published by E. P. Dutton Co., 681 Fifth Avenue, New York. The vast possibility of this type of work is indicated by the fact that the manual names twenty different types of clubs for country girls alone. Leaders in work with boys should be supplied with Veal's "Classified Bibliography of Boy Life," published by Association Press, 347 Madison Avenue, New York.

### *Labor Day*

It is quite essential that this day be used to emphasize the dignity of honest labor. A community program may be held with this in view. As a rule Labor Day is not observed by a local celebration in rural communities. Celebrations in the cities are usually turned over to the labor unions. In a rural community, however, most of the people are laboring at something. Social life there is comparatively simple, making it an ideal place to teach the necessity for a service test in true democracy. It is due the women that emphasis be placed on the dignity of housework and the service rendered by the women in the home.



## OCTOBER

*Home Study*

The community that ceases to study ceases to grow. Less than ten per cent of the people are in school. Many of the remaining ninety per cent need the opportunity for home study. A definite plan should be inaugurated whereby courses of study may be secured and the students assisted so that they will finish their work. In addition to the regular correspondence schools many of the universities and colleges are putting on non-resident courses of study. The National Bureau of Education has established a special Department of Home Study to assist communities free of charge. A thoroughly competent person (if such can be secured) should be placed in charge of the home study work for the community, and every available chance should be made to popularize the movement. This leader will try to make the people of the community think of systematic study as a mark of good citizenship.

*Community Library*

Any community needs a library of some kind. Most States provide circulating libraries to communities wishing them—the books being sent upon request for the express charges. The American Library Association can be depended upon for help in this connection also. For the sake of convenience the library may be in connection with the school. Very helpful suggestions for the creation and maintenance of a community library are contained in a chapter on that subject in "Neighborhood Entertainments," by Stearns. A part of the same movement should be an effort to see that the homes of the community are being supplied with the proper kinds of periodicals. At least one community is known to have tried the plan of forming a reading club representing many of the best homes of the community. The plan of work for the club was for each member to subscribe for a reputable periodical and place an order for the delivery of a good book every three months. That ordering was so planned that no two received the same magazines and books, and as soon as they had been read they were brought to the schoolhouse for

redistribution. This plan gave the entire community continuous access to the best current literature.

### *Vocational Guidance*

In most communities the need for vocational guidance is not being met. Boys and girls should never be allowed to grow to maturity without expert help in the selection of a life work. There should be some sort of a vocational guidance effort each year. The plan should call for the service of the best Christian men and women of the community to advise personally with boys and girls who have questions regarding their life work or any other life problems that are puzzling them. No movement can be conceived that offers a better opportunity for personal evangelism. It is common for these "Find Yourself" Campaigns to discover young men and women who have aptitudes for the ministry or other forms of distinctly religious work. The best help in promoting them can be secured from the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A.

### *Father and Son Week*

Once each year every community should promote a Father and Son Week. This has been for several years nationally featured in February, but is now being observed in some localities in October. Help in preparing for it may be secured from the International Sunday School Association, the Y. M. C. A., or any of the denominational boards.

### *Hallowe'en*

This should be as nearly as possible a community-wide occasion and should be planned with an end in view and carried on under close supervision. Special effort should be made to rob the occasion of its customary spirit of vandalism. The young people are easily shown that the fun of the occasion is not in direct proportion to the amount of damage done. The promotion of a Hallowe'en party is one of the many times during the year when the leader will wish to refer to Bancroft's "Games" for assistance. This book has for years been a standard and should be in the hands of anyone continually engaged in community entertainments.

## 102 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

### NOVEMBER

The prayer service on the morning of Thanksgiving should be largely attended. It is unnecessary to introduce so-called "special" features into the program for the morning. The importance of a large attendance will need, however, to be repeatedly called to the attention of the community. The Sunday prior to Thanksgiving may be used for a special program in which the children will present the spirit of Thanksgiving in recitations and drama. The literature of pageantry is filled with Thanksgiving pageants. Stearns, in his book on "Neighborhood Entertainments," suggests that on Thanksgiving Day a public dinner be provided for those who are alone or away from home. *He suggests also the feasibility of having a list of such persons and seeing to it that they are all invited to homes for dinner.*

#### *Week of Prayer*

This is observed in November or January and a real place on the community program should be made for it. If the community life is prayerless this is a good time to touch it at a point of great need.

#### *Week of Song*

As a community sings, so it is. Use a local song leader if possible. Divide the community into four parts geographically. During each of four evenings in succession have the entire population of one section gather for singing. Place emphasis not upon learning new songs, but upon singing old ones. In four evenings the four sections will have met to sing. Then on the fifth evening, which should be Sunday, let the whole community come together for a Community Sing. The spirit of this week will not be lost, but will be carried into every public gathering for months to come. An outgrowth of community singing is the development of community opera in which appear only home talent. The Week of Song may result in the organization of a Community Chorus (referred to in the program for July).

*Service Monday*

Monday has been found to be the best day for various types of voluntary service in rural communities. The plan for Service Monday is that every person will on that day render some voluntary service to some other person. It must not be allowed to degenerate into a day for giving gifts. It is a good time for groups of persons to combine on some community enterprise. It has been found wise to close the day with a "One Hundred Per Cent Social" in which *all* the people of the community will get together in the evening and some of the experiences of the day will be gone over. . . .

*May Day*

A celebration of May Day naturally takes first place in the program for that month. No time in the year is more auspicious for a great out-of-door community gathering and the creating of a genuine community spirit. The children will welcome a chance to participate in Maypole dances and the varied activities that can be brought within a field day program. Constance D'Arcy Mackay has prepared a choice list of sources of help looking toward a May Day festival. The May Day program can be well used as a summarization of the social work of the year. General field events can be introduced calling for the participation of people of all classes and ages in the community. The bulletin entitled "Play Days in Rural Schools," by Prof. C. J. Galpin and published by the Extension Service of the University of Wisconsin, will be most helpful to one planning for the play features of the May Day program. One of the features of the day's program that is apt to be overlooked is the distribution of baskets of flowers by the little children. In some of the communities this is done the evening before. This can be worth much to the community and especially to the children.

*Clean-Up Day*

Merely the suggestion of this day is sufficient. Its proper promotion involves emphasis upon public sanitation and is unrivaled in its power to produce a justifiable community pride. In country communities it can be coupled with a "Good Roads" day. It can also be used as the time for opening gardening contests and the planting of flowers.

*Mothers' Day*

No day has met with more rapid and universal approval than Mothers' Day. It has an appeal that gives it peculiar force in the community. Help for its promotion is available from so many and varied sources that no particular ones need be mentioned except the various denominational publication societies. The community that fails to make the very most of the day has lost a rare opportunity.

## JUNE

*Summer Athletics*

A *program* of athletics and general recreation for the summer months is imperative. Emphasis is placed on the word *program* for two reasons; first, if the community has no program it is safe to say that ninety-five per cent of the people will not participate in any regular recreational activities; second, a program promoted without the attention of the Church will more likely hinder and neutralize the Church's work. The field of recreation is broad enough for the program to include every person in the community. It will not be possible to perfect a hundred per cent program the first year, but it is entirely possible to have regular recreational activities pursued by all groups of the community. Baseball, Volley Ball, Tennis, Quoits, and Croquet are among the most popular types of summer recreation for young people and adults. Children should be given the benefit of supervised play in adequate and well-equipped space. The equipment for child play, without which all other equipment is vain, is the sand bin. The community can easily provide enough of them for the children to play in without being crowded. A schedule whereby parents or other adults will be with them most of the time can be worked out without difficulty. It must be continually borne in mind that if the Christian people do not promote a recreational program the community will suffer either from having none at all or having the wrong kind.

## JULY

*Daily Vacation Bible School*

No religious or social movement of the last century has matured more rapidly than the Daily Vacation Bible School

since its inception twenty years ago. All denominational publication houses together with the International Sunday School Association can furnish abundant material regarding it.

#### *July Fourth*

In most communities we are in danger of losing even the questionable value of the chaos and pandemonium with which the birth of the nation used to be celebrated. Our efforts to make a sane Fourth have resulted in no Fourth at all. It will not be difficult to plan a program for a day in which the whole community may participate. An old-fashioned Fourth of July Picnic (without horse racing or claptrap gambling devices) always draws a crowd and has unquestioned social value. It is a good time for athletics, mass games, and community singing and speaking. The celebration of the banishment of King Alcohol can now be presented in pageant form. The weather being warm, and the celebration being in the open, this is a good time for any form of outdoor amateur theatricals. The Russell Sage Foundation put out a pamphlet on "How the Fourth was Celebrated in 1911." It consists of programs gathered from all points of the country.

#### *Recreation*

The recreational program for the community will be in its height during the month of July. The leaders will find this the month when their best service is needed to keep up interest and not to allow the program to become one-sided.

#### *Community Chorus*

A community chorus can add materially to the spirit of the community in the summer time. They can give evening recitals once each week and furnish special music for all occasions. A well-defined movement is now under way to organize choral clubs in rural communities taking the place of the now extinct singing class, but conducted in much the same way. This event can be coupled with weekly band concerts if there is a community band or one can be organized.

#### *Barbecues*

They are hard to promote and require a large amount of work. They had better not be undertaken than to run the

## 106 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

risk of failure. Something in the nature of a home-coming and barbecue, however, cannot be rivaled in its power as a community builder. These events may be coupled with the Fourth of July celebration.

### AUGUST

#### *Boys' Camp and Girls' Camp*

In no case must these be held jointly. They may be at the same time but at different places, or at the same place and at different times. It has been found by experience that the latter part of August, just before the opening of school, is a good time for camps. There are two things that will cause a camp to fail; poor management and overcrowding. If there is no one in the community who has had experience in camping for boys and girls, an outsider should be called in to assist in laying plans and throughout the camp period. No event in the year's program has for the young people the character-making value of a properly conducted camp.

#### *Stick-to-School Campaign*

The attention of all the youth of the community should be centered once a year on the value of an education. This properly comes a few weeks before the opening of the school year. It can be by an address or addresses, or by a miscellaneous program. It has the effect also of creating the right point of view on a part of the pupils who attend, and has great value with the adults, as many of them have a very indistinct idea of the place of the school in the community.

#### *Leaders' Training Conference*

If the program has been in operation for several months, the idea will have become fairly well defined in the minds of the leaders of the community life and in August they need to get together for a study of the needs of the fall and winter. The conference should be for several days. It may be in the nature of a retreat or short-term leaders' camp at the close of the boys' and girls' camp.

It is clear that such a program as has just been suggested can best be carried out by those who have received training in conference, and who have profited by the experience of

others. Our Churches need leaders who are willing to study and work.

The Church either as an entity or in the person of its leaders and members can coöperate in specific plans and services with organizations sometimes called allies of the Church.

1. Organizations not an integral part of the local Church, but which are Christian in objective and which are by their own rules controlled by Church people, such as

(1) Woman's Christian Temperance Union, local, county, State, National.

(2) Anti-saloon League.

(3) Y. M. C. A., local, county, State, National.

(4) Y. W. C. A., local, county, State, National.

(5) State Bible Societies, etc.

2. Organizations which have the community service ideal but which are not distinctively under Church auspices, as

(1) The Grange, local, State, National.

(2) Village Improvement Society.

(3) The Board of Trade or business organizations.

(4) Libraries.

(5) Schools.

(6) County Farm Bureaus.

(7) State Agricultural Colleges, Extension Department.

(8) Social Service agencies, county and State.

(9) Playground Associations.

(10) State Board of Health.

(11) Free Public Library Commission.

(12) Red Cross.

(13) Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls.



(14) County Agricultural Associations, Parent-Teacher Associations, or, as in Virginia, Coöperative Educational Association.

Some of the most successful and outstanding Country Churches \* are coöperating through one or more of the subsidiary organizations in such community activities as the securing of Good Roads, the activities of a Fire Department, Law Enforcement, Securing Clean Government, Village Improvement, Poor Relief, Health, Americanization Work, Farmers' Institutes, Employment Service, Red Cross, Securing Better Schools, Library, etc.

The Country Church by the dissemination of literature, books, addresses, and pageants can greatly influence public opinion toward the material and cultural improvement of the countryside and help promote "better farming, better business, and better living."

The community service committee in the local Church should be the clearing house for information to the Church concerning these various agencies and could be the point of contact of the Church with their work.

\* "Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches," by E. de S. Brunner, page 154.

## CHAPTER IX

### ADMINISTRATION, ORGANIZATION, AND FINANCE OF THE COUNTRY CHURCH

THESE three ideas—Administration, Organization, and Finance—are not usually put together, but there is really a closer connection than at first appears. A Church organized and with a goodly percentage of its people at work will have much less difficulty than ordinary in planning for and securing proper support. A budget for the local Church needs, really presupposes, a plan of work and proper distribution of resources in people and money to carry out the Church objectives.

The pastor is the chief administrator of the entire Church enterprise. It is by those qualities of tact and managerial skill which make the administering of any enterprise possible that he will be successful. The Church enterprises depend for their success upon the response and coöperation of persons nearly all of whom give their services voluntarily. It is therefore very necessary that the pastor have managerial skill sufficient to secure coöperation on the part of the persons designated and the organizations responsible for the entire Church program.

There is difference of opinion as to how far and in what ways the pastor shall have a part in securing the funds necessary to carry on the local activities including payment of salaries. He is almost universally held

responsible for the securing of moneys for the wider coöperation through Boards of Missions in State, National, and World missionary enterprises. He should study himself and his people and stir up this gift of management and fiscal capacity. Not every pastor has outstanding ability with financial matters, but he certainly should have an advisory relation to all financial plans and methods of securing funds.

The officers and organization of a Church as at present provided are the result of the general experience of Christian Churches at large, of the particular denomination, and of the nature and type of the local Church. Certain polities have developed as methods of Church government, and this discussion is not intended to try to evaluate these, as they differ in the different denominations.

Special committees and subsidiary organizations are created to meet special local conditions and needs. Certain sound principles of organization had emerged before Christianity came out of the New Testament period. Broadly speaking, a Church has unescapable material interests and also interests that are spiritual and have to do with persons and personal behavior more largely.

Perhaps a majority of the churches which serve country people—certainly a majority of open country and hamlet churches—are associated in a circuit, parish, or field, where two or more churches or preaching points are served by one pastor. It is not always done, but *the circuit or entire field should be organized by having representatives of each of the churches, or places of service, elected to a committee or council of the entire circuit.* This council should meet at stated intervals

and at special call and consider and recommend back to the separate Churches such matters as are of common interest or such as need adjustment between the Churches. This will create a united consciousness and will promote coöperation and mutual understanding making for efficiency. Much working at cross purposes can be avoided by organizing the circuit or field and having a council.

In those denominations that are congregational it is often difficult to keep separate churches or congregations in anything like permanent or lasting coöperation as one circuit or field. This council, made up of representatives of the separate Churches, will do much toward making the arrangements lasting, and enable the field to secure continuity of service especially when pastoral changes are made.

The organization of the local church will result normally from three sets of influences: first, the polity of the denomination at large; second, the almost universal experience of Protestantism as to the offices and functions required in practically every Church; and third, from the ascertained need for committees, officers, and subsidiary organizations disclosed by the study of the community and the Church. In a word, the program must be provided for, and the extent and nature of the organization will be greatly determined by what is needed to carry out the program.

Buildings and equipment, care of properties, activities for age and sex groups, coöperation in community service, and the ability of the Church to find the funds for an inclusive program—all will be factors in determining the specific organization of the Church. But these needs and functions are fairly universal.

Practically all Churches with any element of democratic expression and government will have two Boards: one to care for the properties and material concerns of the Church, the other to care for the spiritual concerns of the Church and congregation. These officials are variously designated—Trustees, Stewards, Elders, Deacons. A Clerk or Secretary and a Treasurer, together with organist and janitor or sexton, are officials found in practically all Churches.

It is advisable to provide for two principles in the setting up of the administration and executive functions of the entire Church enterprise. *The first should provide for a large and fairly inclusive body, representative of all interests and organizations.* This is often called the Advisory Board. It should include Trustees, Stewards, Elders or Deacons, Superintendent of the Sunday School, President of the Women's Societies, President of the Young People's organizations, and the heads of any other separate departments or organizations in the Church. It might be well to add to this larger governing board three members of the Church and congregation elected at large. A quarterly meeting of this Advisory Board should be held to consider all the interests of the Church, particularly special needs and problems that have arisen, and to recommend to particular organizations certain procedure and activities as needed.

In this way provision is made by which a large group representing all the special and departmentalized interests of the Church will meet and will be acquainted with what the others are planning or doing. This group would number from fifteen to thirty in most Churches.

A second principle is to provide for a *smaller execu-*

*tive committee or Pastor's Cabinet chosen by this Advisory Board* or by the Church from the members of the Advisory Board. This Executive Committee or Cabinet will carry out in the interim of the meetings of the Advisory Board all plans and projects agreed upon. They will have responsibility for seeing that the Church program is actually executed. The nature and number of committees and organizations in the local Church will be greatly affected by the promotional activities of denominational agencies and boards, and even by interdenominational agencies. But all committees, organizations, functions, and subsidiary societies should be aspects of the Church work—never independent, never determining absolutely their place and program apart from the Church. All these should be under the supervision of the Advisory Board, the larger group, and the Executive Committee, the smaller group of the Church.

The Sunday school is a part of the Church, and whatever autonomy and authority it has should be such as the Church has granted. The Superintendent should be an officer of the Church and provision should be made for the election or appointment of other officers and teachers in the Sunday school, subject to approval of the Advisory Board acting for the Church, or the approval of the Church.

This method of government will provide for coherence and continuity in the Church affairs and will prevent working too much at cross purposes. A large number in the Church will be aware of the work of all departments and all activities, and a proper balance of interest and effort can thus be maintained.

The various committees which are to perform regular

or special functions should be appointed or approved by the Advisory Board and the Church. There will nearly always be a Committee on Music, an Evangelistic Committee, a Sunday School Cabinet, a Committee on Women's Work, a Committee on Young People's Work, and a Community Service Committee. As far as need may suggest and as may be possible, these committees should be made representative of different group interests.

The qualifications and duties of the various officers of the Church and the auxiliary organizations are of course important matters. It is, however, one thing to set forth or have in mind ideal qualifications which would fit one for a certain office and another thing to find persons already equipped with these qualifications. Church officers should be selected according to the characteristics most available, and should be trained or pass a period tantamount to apprenticeship in less responsible positions, before being placed in the more responsible office. "The children of the world" have taught us much in this regard; and seniority, fidelity, and personal attitudes should largely determine promotions.

An Elder, Steward, or Deacon has about all one man can do in the way of voluntary service; and apart from service on special committees, it is best to limit one office to one person except in various emergencies. Deacons, Elders, and Stewards should serve on the Finance Committee when needed.

There are Scriptural qualifications for these offices, and it is always wise to select men who meet reasonably well these requirements. To be able to rule one's own household, to be broad in sympathies, above petty selfishness, not a lover of money but a lover of God, and

to have a good character and reputation—these at least are necessary in the man who is to be a spiritual overseer of the household of God.

He would do well to be a regular and faithful attendant at worship, and it is preferable that he be a man of prayer, able to lead the devotions of his own home and of the congregation as well. He will meet the demands of his office best if he is sympathetic and helpful in the sickroom, and if he is tactful in personal work with inquirers or those who are approachable with a religious appeal. He is to be the special upholder and encourager of the pastor and regularly to remember the pastor in prayer.

The spiritual welfare of the Church is largely committed to these officers, and the membership should be divided so as to give the Deacon or Steward a fair share of the members on the Church roll to counsel and advise with, and, as an under-shepherd coöperating with the pastor, look after the spiritual condition of his group or assignment. Country Churches can seldom have an assistant pastor, therefore there is all the more need that the spiritual officers of the Church undertake the work usually done by a staff of workers in large city churches.

A Trustee, whose duties are largely legal and formal, is elected to hold the Church property in trust, subject of course to the instructions of the Church. Chosen for his standing in the business world, Trustees are not usually, although there are marked exceptions, intimately acquainted with or efficient in spiritual matters. However, a spiritually minded Trustee is greatly to be desired and often it is possible for one and the same person to be both Trustee and Deacon or Steward.



The President of the Woman's Society or organized work in the Church is an office of unusual influence and possibilities. When the Missionary Society and the Ladies' Aid Society are one organization—and it seems by far the wisest arrangement to have them so—the President of this organization has varied duties, spiritual and administrative, to perform. Mission Study, Personal and Social Service, utilizing the leisure of many of the women, Aid work, and various group activities, are coördinated under her guidance. At the head of each of these various groups will be a deputy to lead and to be responsible to the inclusive organization, its President, and to the Church. To coöperate in framing the program of these various departments of women's work requires the sanest, most gracious and able woman available. Piety and good judgment should be her adornment, and patience to plan and execute among her many capacities.

It seems hardly necessary to go into detail concerning the duties and qualifications of the Church Clerk, the President of the Young People's Society, the Chorister, the Head Usher, and the Janitor. Of course everybody knows that a college course and even graduate work in a professional school would not be too much to ask of a man who aspires to be Janitor of a church—so much depends on him. Church Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee receive consideration in the discussion of finances.

Suffice it to say that the capacities of men and women should be commandeered for the work of the Church and their aptitudes should be Christianized, so that a man of clerical gifts and abilities is chosen for Clerk, a man

of musical talent and attractiveness chosen for Chorister, etc.

That care should be taken in selecting Church officers goes without saying, and to avoid hasty and ill-advised nominations and selections, a nominating committee should canvass the entire range of possibilities and available material, and make report and suggestions to the Church at the meeting when elections are to be held.

It is well to read out in a public service the names of those elected at the annual meetings, and to take time for some formal recognition or dedication of these to their respective tasks. A splendid text for such a service would be John xv. 16, where Jesus says: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should abide." This text introduces the Biblical idea of Election to Service, the only doctrine of election found in the Bible.

The Deacon or Steward has a function to fulfill that may require some technical training. Usually officers in a Church and its auxiliary organizations pick up their knowledge of the office, but the time has come for Officers' Training Schools in the local Church. These could be made a part of the Institutes and Schools of Methods either in the local Church or in a District Conference or Association. A week given in the local Church to a consideration of the duties of officers and committees, combining certain social features and using some outside neighboring talent, might well be the most profitable series of meetings in the Church year.

The Finance Committee will have as its specific duty

the shaping of the budget to meet the needs of the program and the securing of the funds to take care of the budget. Deacons, Stewards, or Elders should serve on this committee or be fully represented on it.

Certain general considerations are in order. As the Treasurer of the Church a man of probity and financial standing, yet with sufficient leisure to give some attention to the keeping of financial records, should be chosen. The Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee perhaps should not be one and the same person. If possible, the offices should be kept separate, but the Treasurer (or Treasurers) should at least be a member of the Finance Committee and should meet with this committee. It is far better to have two Treasurers, one for Church expenses, another for benevolences.

It is not our purpose in this discussion to go into the question of educating the Church in a general way in the grace of liberality or the principles of stewardship and sound finances. It is taken for granted that the pastor will do all possible in the course of his regular ministry to the Church to expound the Christian view of property, and of participation through material means, in the work of the Church and the kingdom of God.

Questions of Stewardship of Life and Possessions, of the Tithe, of special training of the young, of thank offerings and the like, may well be brought to the attention of the Church in tract and study book, in Church School instruction, in pulpit utterance. The pastor and Church should make provision to coöperate with denominational agencies whose function it is to carry on an intensive campaign for cultivating intelligent and systematic proportionate giving. This task, however,

does not fall to the Treasurer or Finance Committee. Theirs is the task of ascertaining legitimate monetary needs of the Church program, ascertaining the financial resources available to meet these needs, and framing a plan and procedure which will secure the needed money.

Every Church should budget its financial responsibilities and needs. In the budget of the local Church there will ordinarily be the two divisions; one dealing with benevolences, the other with current expenses. There are those who argue strongly that a separate Treasurer should be elected for each of these parts of the budget, and the two funds kept entirely separate.

The budget of benevolences, or that portion of the Church moneys which is to be spent on others—missions, Church philanthropies, and general denominational needs—is usually allotted or apportioned to the local church sometimes as an assessment, and sometimes as a suggestion, called an apportionment.

If from experience of the past it is fairly certain that only a certain per cent of the membership can be relied upon to respond, any scheme or plan of the Finance Committee to secure the raising of the total benevolence budget must take that fact, and similar facts, into account. Theorists of all sorts, however well meaning, can easily mislead a committee at this point. The fund must be allotted, at least tentatively, where reasonable faith and expectation give ground of hope that it will be secured. But we will take this point up more at length later.

The budget of current expenses should be made up of items intended to meet the actually adopted program of the Church. In a Country Church the salary of the minister, often the only voluntarily paid community

worker, will be the largest item. In most Churches this salary is about two-thirds of the entire amount usually raised for current expenses. The tendency is toward adding items of expense which change this proportion, and toward providing funds for activities heretofore not arranged for or included in the Church budget. Expenses for publicity, supplies to meet an expanding program, training school expense, community service, and the like, all go into the current expense budget.

It is not merely a matter of logical or chronological order to determine the question as to whether a Church should adopt its full program first, and then raise the funds to meet it,\* or first find out how much money can be raised and then decided on the program. The ability and willingness of the people and previous success or failure in securing amounts sought will of course help determine how far a budget may safely be expanded, and expenses incurred, before the money is actually raised or subscribed. Common sense and reasonable faith will help at this point. The getting a Church to adopt an expanded program with enlarged budget of expenditures may be a matter of education.

The point to be kept in mind is that the program must be considered in connection with the budget, and usually work actually accomplished will furnish a basis for renewed or continual appeal. A going concern is much easier to finance than a concern which is allowed to languish with many unfulfilled promises.

It is doubtless true that the ability and fidelity of a pastor of a Country Church counts for more in making possible the raising of the current expense budget than in the case of a city pastor. Hence the pastor who does

\* See the Chapter on "Objectives and Program."

his work well and faithfully is a distinct asset in securing adequate finances.

It is one of the duties of the Finance Committee to try to determine the difficulties as well as the carrying power in certain items of the budget, and to assemble all possible reasons for having the several items in the budget.

There are unusual and unforeseen financial needs that arise and it is wise to leave the special offerings usually taken at holiday and other seasons to take care of these, rather than to reckon them in as assets in raising the regular budget.

Voluntary offerings for special evangelistic services usually are not considered as part of the budget at all, but it is wise for a Church Treasurer to record these offerings and not to pass them on unopened to the Evangelist. They may be entered under the head of special expenses (not benevolences) and thus be included in a grand total of money raised.

When the budget has been accepted and approved, then the task of the Finance Committee is to secure the amounts approved. It is always best to estimate conservatively any amount included in the funds which apply on the budget—loose collections and the like. The amount to be subscribed by persons, if the budget is to be secured, should be definite and usually allowance should be made to provide for unavoidable shrinkage in pledges. *The Every-member Canvass should then follow and be pushed zealously and religiously as the most effective spiritual service the Finance Committee can render the Church and community.*

It must be remembered that the Every-member Canvass may be conducted in different ways and various

details of method used. The emphasis is on *every member*. This kind of campaign is to displace the subscription paper with subscriptions made on an annual basis, and should be the opposite of all hit-or-miss ways of securing Church funds.

The Country Church is not able, as a well-nigh universal rule, to raise money by renting pews or by assessments direct, and should eschew the money-making devices of a commercial or semi-commercial sort. The donation to supplement a pastor's living is a delusion and a snare when formally used, and when the articles given are estimated in money equivalents. Of course, out of good will and love of the pastor, many members of the Country Church will want to bring or send in some choice article of food or of general use, but all such should be in the nature of appreciations and extras. The donation party, as such, is too much of a humiliation in most cases.

In setting up the Every-member Canvass a list of members and friends who are to be canvassed should be made, and the Finance Committee, which ought to be the committee in charge of the canvass, should try to indicate on the list what members are reasonably expected to do. The actual canvass should be made by a large group. Ten per cent of the membership of the Church has been suggested.\*

A Sunday should be selected and notice given at least two weeks in advance that on that particular Sunday a canvassing committee of two would personally solicit every household and individual for a weekly pledge toward both local expense and benevolences—both parts of the budget. When the announcement of

\* See "Modern Money Methods," by F. A. Agar.

the date is made, it should also be made clear what the total budget sought is, and the major items explained. If a calendar is published, the itemized budget should be printed in it. It is advisable to print a form letter with itemized budget included if the Church does not have a regular calendar. The idea is to get before the people the needs of the Church and the fact that it is *every member's* responsibility. This form letter or calendar should be sent or mailed to every prospective subscriber at least a week before the canvass.

The actual soliciting should be done on the one Sunday, and should be repeated each year. However, some successful country churches have the pledging done at an annual roll call (or at least a part of it) and then follow up those who were absent to secure their pledge.

It has sufficient educational value for the ten per cent of the membership who conduct the canvass particularly, and also for the church and community, to justify the amount of work required to repeat the canvass fully each year.

The Canvassing Committee, which is only the Finance Committee calling others to its aid, and thus constituting a large group to do the canvassing, should be divided into twos, and the names to be solicited divided among them. Acquaintance, friendship, or any other basis of influence should be taken into account. Geographical distribution should not be the only controlling principle.

On the Sunday of the Canvass the entire group who are to do the soliciting meet at some appointed place, preferably the church, long enough before the regular service *to have a meeting for prayer and to make their own pledges.* The Chairman of the Committee and one



other would be a splendid two to pledge the Committee. *Get a pledge from every member of the Canvassing Committee.* Having made a pledge themselves, they are now in a proper state of mind to seek to secure pledges from those who are on their lists.

The pledge should be made payable weekly and should be for both current expenses and benevolences. Of course common sense must be used, and if an individual will not pledge weekly, any sort of pledge he will make should be taken and due record made.

Late on the Sunday of the Canvass, the hour being determined by local conditions, all the workers return to the church and hand in their full report. A summary of results should be made known to the Church at once, or at the very first meeting after the canvass. Persons who had not pledged or who for any reason had not been seen should be reassigned and visited at the earliest opportunity. Non-resident or absent members should be solicited by letter and the Treasurer should try to keep such reminded from time to time as to this pledge and the payments made.

Time spent in drilling the canvassers in tact and persuasiveness, and in the arguments for an every-member pledge, will be time well spent. The entire task should be undertaken in a spirit of prayer and consecration and should seek to bind the member as well as a part of his means to the program of the Church.

Every one who pledges should be presented with a package of envelopes, preferably the Duplex or double-pocket envelope, because pledges have been sought and secured for the two separate objects—local expenses and benevolences.

An increasing number of city churches are following

substantially the foregoing general plan. Occasionally, a Church will lump its entire budget, secure pledges, weekly or otherwise, and then as payments come in divide the fund on a recognized percentage basis between current expenses and benevolences. One Treasurer is all that is needed under this system. The system itself, however, involves greater temptation on the part of Church Treasurer or Advisory Board to use all funds for immediate local needs, and fail to forward the proper percentage promptly to the benevolent objects to which they belong.

Many Country Churches have practically no system of financing at all, or a careless method of desultory solicitation by one person or a small committee with the consequent laxness of the Church in giving and in meeting obligations. The Every-Member Canvass for a carefully prepared and adopted budget in two parts with two Treasurers, with Duplex envelopes to pay weekly pledges as far as practicable, seems to be, all things considered, the best method of securing adequate and regular financing for the Church program.

Certain definite spiritual results ought and usually do follow the adoption and working of this system. The canvassers will inevitably boost the pastor and the Church and the denominational objectives represented in the budget. They will have fine fellowship in actual Christian work and will be able to find and help resolve many difficulties confronting the Church. In weekly giving the grace of liberality will be noticeably developed.

It has been found necessary in a number of Churches to have clerical assistance of some kind, or an assistant to the Treasurer, or Treasurers, to take care of the

records, because of an increase in the number of givers and to take care of reports and careful follow-up. This is an evidence of the success of the plan, and such assistance should be cheerfully arranged for by the Church.

The Sunday school or Church School should be financed in the regular budget rather than by its own weekly class offerings. The offerings of the school can then go to Missions or benevolences and become a means of missionary education in the school. It is coming to be the custom to permit organized classes to retain a percentage of their offering to take care of moderate class expenses. This is ordinarily the best way to finance an organized class and avoids too much multiplication of the offerings and dues one must meet to be connected with a Church or Sunday school.

## CHAPTER X

### THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND WORLD PROBLEMS

FOR more than a century American Churches have been engaged, with a commendable zeal, in the Foreign Missionary enterprise. Country Churches as well as urban Churches have shared in this form of altruism, although interest in the enterprise has probably been more difficult to develop and maintain in the Country Church. City Churches have been more frequently visited by returned missionaries, and mission study groups, as a form of local Church activity, have been much more easily organized and conducted.

Nevertheless the Country Church, through loyalty to the denomination of which it is a part, has participated with a fair degree of regularity in the making of Christianity a world religion.

A vast amount of knowledge of foreign countries, their life and customs, has been disseminated among the members of Evangelical Churches. However, great ignorance of the conditions and needs, religious and social, of non-Christian lands, remains among members of our Churches. It is not easy to awaken intelligent interest in the problems which confront efforts at world evangelization and the spreading of Christian civilization.

The achievements of the missionaries, many of whom have gone from Country Churches, is one of the most brilliant chapters in Church History. The missionaries

have reduced many of the languages of the world to writing and have made a grammar for the language. Discoveries such as quinine have been made. Inventions such as the jinrikisha, the vehicle for conveying individuals in the Orient, are the work of missionaries. Social reforms have followed the establishing of Mission Churches, and a mere recital of the scientific and social by-products of Foreign Missions would require a long list. "The most careless observer can tell the house of a Christian convert of some years' standing from that of his non-Christian fellow tribesman by the greater cleanliness of the Christian's house and the general neatness and orderliness of everything about it."\* The Churches should appreciate the brilliant achievements of Christian Missions in their noble work of civilizing and educating the backward races and peoples of the world. "The civilizing influence which the mere presence of a missionary has been to the native population, and the fact that all the native schools in Papua are conducted by missionaries, together with the devoted assistance which the missions have given in combating epidemics, constitutes a sufficient answer to the contention that the missionaries have done no good; but, upon broader grounds, I think that missions are absolutely necessary to the development of backward races. An uncivilized people who come into contact with Europeans will inevitably be led, sooner or later, to abandon their old customs and beliefs, which have served as a guide for generations, and, when these are gone, the 'native' is lost, unless some one is there to put some form of religious teaching in their place."†

\* "Social Problems and the East," by Frank Lenwood, page 32.

† Ibid, page 33.

Some group or committee should be developed whose function it is to distribute the best and most wide-awake missionary information among the members, and pastors and teachers in the Bible School should co-operate to secure a well-informed missionary spirit and keep it alive in every Country Church. Christians need have no misgivings as to the past value and present challenging significance of their world-wide program of evangelism and social service as represented in the missionary enterprise. It has now become clear that we must either Christianize heathenism or it will heathenize us. The world has become a neighborhood. It is our task to make it a brotherhood.

World affairs are now entering on a new phase, and with the changed conditions new problems and new opportunities have arisen. To understand these problems and the bearing of our Christian faith on them is essential for the Country Churches of America particularly in order that the full moral and spiritual influence of our nation may be brought to bear to meet the situation. A vast amount of idealism and the spirit of altruism is found unalloyed among the country people, and this idealism must be informed and led into the wider service of a world community's needs.

The race problem has become an international problem. It is true that its peculiar and ever-present difficulties in certain local communities are often due to the fact of widespread migrations, and the polyglot, heterogeneous make-up of many modern nations. Our nation, perhaps as much as any other, is made up of peoples from many lands who represent the most diverse racial and cultural background. These contacts in local com-

munities, and the adjustments they necessitate, furnish for most rural people their only basis for knowledge of the international and big-scale adjustments that are now being attempted, and which will doubtless vex the world for generations to come.

It will not do for the Country Church to crystallize its thinking prematurely and to allow prejudice and fear to refuse all consideration of the ethical and spiritual aspects of race relations as they affect world peace and comity between nations. To the Country Church will fall a large share of the task of conserving the best that is in the moral and social standards of America, against the inevitable spiritual erosions and modifications now taking place in industrialized and urban centers. We must therefore do our best to Christianize and befriend the stranger now in our midst, and also to help Christianize the foreign policy and the attitude of our people toward other nations and peoples. "A lady in a town in a Northwestern State was greatly interested in what she heard of Christianity in Japan, but finally said: 'I can hardly believe that there is even one honest or decent Christian among the Japanese here in our town. I can forgive their being poor and not understanding our ways, but I cannot forgive the fact that they all live in what used to be the licensed quarter of this city. If they had any self-respect, they would not be living there!' I asked if not one had ever tried to move away. She at first thought not, but suddenly looked startled, and said that once a very nice-looking Japanese man had come to her house asking if the house next hers was for rent. The house belonged to her and had a sign 'For Rent' on it at the time. 'He seemed a nice man,' she said, 'but I knew that to rent the house

to him would depreciate the property, so I had to tell him that it was not for rent at that time.' " \*

It will probably take long years to organize the sentiment and thinking of the Churches of America as to the place of responsibility and opportunity that our country holds in helping to establish right relations of coöperation and concord between the nations of the world; the task of creating the idea of a world citizenship looks at times insuperable. Yet the power of Christ can compass even that.

Some are even now wondering whether part of the missionary moneys might not be well expended in a progress of self-education of our Churches as to the value to the world and to the Church of a League or Association of Nations. God is the God of all the nations, and not alone "Unser Gott."

Without any attempt to further partisan political opinion or the fortunes of any one person, it will be well for Christian people to confront what seems the challenge of God in events. He is calling us to lend our moral influence to the task of organizing the world. The final religion cannot be self-regarding.

*We must outlaw war.* We must disarm the mind of mankind. In fact, the movement to make war a thing of the past among civilized peoples has already begun, and the enlistment of all our Churches in the movement will greatly accelerate the coming of that day foretold by the prophet, "Neither shall they learn war any more." *The war on war is now under way.*

Individuals and groups of Christians throughout the centuries, typical of whom are the Quakers or Friends,

\* "Social Problems and the East," by Frank Lenwood, page 160.



have believed and taught and have often sealed their testimony with their life, that war is against the spirit and teaching of Christ. Our day is witnessing the mobilization of sentiment, conscience, and intelligence to find a way to end war as a method of settling international disputes. Legal social machinery for effectively putting a ban on aggressive warfare will come as a response to this marshaling of the spiritual forces of Christendom. "Not by might, nor by an army, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

Christian people are interested to know where He whom we call Lord and Master stands—what would be his attitude in connection with this great world peace movement. He is called the Prince of Peace. He is to guide our feet into the way of Peace. The work of his Righteousness is to be Peace and the effect of it quietness and assurance forever. He taught, "Blessed are the peacemakers." The fruits of his spirit are love, joy, peace. His apostles enjoined: "Seek peace, and pursue it." "God hath called us unto peace." "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not."

If the early Church in its attitude and policy is any help to us in understanding Christ, the testimony is conclusive that Christianity as it came from Christ was against war and any kind of violent coercion of our fellow men. The early Church was essentially missionary. It went out, not seeking to conquer other peoples for selfish ends, but to take to others a share of its own blessings. The most heroic pages of history are those that recite the conquests of peace, as the heralds of the cross went into the wilds of bordering nations and tribes

and won them for Christ. And this heroism has persisted, although at times war methods have also been resorted to by ecclesiastical leaders to subdue and hold to allegiance peoples not so willingly confessing Christ.

Christianity as it came from Christ and the Apostles was also essentially anti-militaristic. Purified by persecutions and crowned by martyrdom, the Church of the first centuries went forth to spiritual conquests only. "Behold how they love one another" was the high testimony everywhere. They followed the injunction of Jesus literally, and prayed for their enemies and those who spitefully used them and persecuted them. In all the thousands of inscriptions in the catacombs, not one has been discovered expressing resentment or hate. Peace is the prevailing note.

It has been written of the Church of those days: "It is as easy to obscure the sun at midday as to deny that the primitive Christians renounced all revenge and war." All who bore the sword for Rome were excluded from the number of catechumens, and those who voluntarily became soldiers were excommunicated. Says Justin Martyr: "We who in times past killed one another do not now fight with our enemies." Says Irenæus: "Christians have changed their swords and their lances into instruments of peace, and they know not how to fight."

From all this we would not urge any counsel of perfection, or call on all Christians to-day to be pacifists. Perhaps we have not grace enough to be pacifists, and now the responsibilities of State and Government are in the hands of all in our democracies. But one thing is certain: they who really take Christ and their Christianity seriously will not accept recurrent wars

with their fearful destruction and inhumanity, their indecencies and hates which sweep away all we are seeking to build up, as a final and permanent arrangement in a world where Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, make earth like heaven." We are bound to support intelligent and persistent efforts to secure world peace upon an intelligent and well-ordered foundation.

In the third century changes came over the peace-advocating and exemplifying Church of Christ. A primitive democracy slowly changed to an ecclesiastical aristocracy. Bishops and later popes became militant and resorted to coercion and force to work their will. Lecky in his "History of European Morals" says: "Of military religion Christianity had been at first the extreme negation. When the cross was carried in the forefront of the Roman armies (A.D. 312), it was evident that a great change was passing over the once pacified spirit of the Church. The stigma which Christianity had attached to war was gradually effaced. At the same time the Church remained, on the whole, a pacific influence. The transition from the almost Quaker tenets of the primitive Church to the essentially military Christianity of the Crusaders was chiefly due to another cause—to the terrors and to the example of Mohammedanism. The spirit of this religion slowly passed into Christianity and transformed it into its own image. It would be impossible to conceive a more complete transformation than Christianity has thus undergone and it is melancholy to contrast with its aspects during the Crusades the impression it had once most justly made upon the world, as the spirit of gentleness and of peace encountering the spirit of violence and war."

There is no cruelty and tyranny that merciless warriors can devise that was not a part of the program of pope and prelate of the Middle Ages; and if the very test of Christ himself is applied, "By their fruits ye shall know them," these, and this idea of Christianity, do not represent Christ. Even Protestantism sought to extend its borders by force, and the great wars of religion culminating in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), decimated and almost destroyed Europe and its hard-won treasures of civilization.

It must not be supposed that those Christians who in the name of Christ have opposed war consistently throughout the centuries have been actuated by fear or are lacking in valor. The peaceful missionary conquests of the cross have been marked by heroisms seldom matched even on fields of battle. Says William James: "We need to discover in the social realm the moral equivalent of war; something heroic that will speak to men as universally as war does, and yet will be as compatible with their spiritual selves as war has proved itself to be incompatible." For vast numbers of loyal and devoted ministers and missionaries this substitute has been found in the vicarious service of their fellow men.

"An endless' line of splendor,  
 These troops with heaven for home!  
 With creed they go from Scotland,  
 With incense go from Rome.  
 These in the name of Jesus  
 Against the dark gods stand:  
 They gird the earth with valor,  
 They heed the King's command.

Onward the line advances,  
 Shaking the hills with power;

Swaying the hidden demons,  
 The lions that devour.  
 No bloodshed in the wrestling,  
 But souls newborn arise;  
 The nations growing kinder,  
 The child heart growing wise.

What is the final ending?  
 The issue, can we know?  
 Will Christ outlive Mahommed?  
 Will Kali's altars go?  
 This is our faith tremendous,  
 Our wild hope who shall scorn?  
 That in the name of Jesus  
 The world shall be reborn." \*

Now to the practical considerations in connection with the next big item on the calendar of united Christian effort and world influence which it is tremendously important to have the Country Churches understand and support. This task is nothing less than bringing about a new conscience with respect to war and finding an organization for mankind which will organize the world for peace. *It is the issue of War and of International Government.*

The view of Glenn Frank expressed in an address before the Methodist General Conference and printed in the *Nation* of June 4, 1924, is an effective presentation of the matter about which the Church is now being urged to do something:

The State may spend its time dilly-dallying with the problem of war; the Church dare not. If in the future the Church is to be more than an exhorting ambulance-driver in world politics, it must choose now between Jesus and generals.

It is so easy for the Church to say that, as an organization,

\* Vachell Lindsay.

it will not bless any war, and then follow such an assertion with a weasel phrase such as "Except wars of defense and wars waged in a righteous cause." As if any nation ever admitted that it fought a war that was not in self-defense or in a righteous cause! Personally I believe it is wiser for the Church to remain silent on the subject of war until it is ready to speak with a sweeping courage that will mobilize the mind of the world against war. I see no point to the mere reaffirmation of the multiplication table.

I do not say that we may not find ourselves maneuvered into a position that will compel us to enter another war even within the lifetime of my generation. All I say is that if we find ourselves dragged into war by the stupidity or cupidity of political or industrial leadership, let us go into war honestly admitting that it is an ugly job that has been made necessary by stupidity and cupidity, and not insult the name and disgrace the Church of Jesus of Nazareth, by fooling ourselves into thinking we are entering a spiritual crusade. Even a war waged for what appears a righteous cause is a spiritually destructive process.

Make no mistake. If the Church says frankly and uncompromisingly that, as an organization, it will never sanction or take part in war, some semi-Christian laymen will withdraw their financial support from the Church and its activities. But this should not, in my judgment, deter the Church from taking this stand. The Church could well afford to retrench on many of its official activities, if necessary, in order to free itself for the taking of a courageous step that would morally electrify the world. The Church is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. It must not allow the care of its machinery to steal away its strength from the serving of its highest mission, the Christianization of human society—a thing that will remain impossible as long as churches sanction war.

This probably is in some respects an extreme statement of the case, but we must ponder its significance. The Church must declare war to be a sin and mean it. Such a declaration will then furnish a rallying standard

for the moral conscience of all the Churches, and Christian people will then have hope of moral support for honest efforts at finding a way to insure peace, and make organized peace a part of our civilization as war is now an accepted method in international relationships.

What can an individual do or what can a small and relatively weak Church in the country do? The State is made up of private citizens, and as they are animated by sound sentiment they will share in the making of a sound moral will that will be reflected in the policies and procedure of governments. Each of us is only a drop, but together we make up the river of public opinion that will sweep on in its resistless course. We need in every Christian nation a public opinion which will give more constant thought and keener attention to international policy, and lift it to a higher level. The world is appealing to the churches of America to create sentiment and a will to furnish the spiritual support for machinery to bring about a warless world.

We can make war on experts so-called, and expose the preparedness fallacy. Nothing is more apparent than that large and expensive preparation for war has not been a means of averting war. Statesmen and diplomats have, as experts, been claiming for centuries to protect the common people from possible wars and have kept the people fooled. But wars have not ceased, nor have they been lessened in their fearful destructiveness by these experts. Let the Churches take a hand in molding opinion. Let us refuse to hate, as we are told to hate by our political leaders who really insist that we preach in time of war what is tantamount to a denial of what we preach in time of peace.

We must disarm the mind of the world by shifting

the emphasis in our history from war heroes to men and women who have wrought some good work in the name of all humanity. Says Dr. William A. Smith: "What folly that school children should know all about Napoleon, and so little about Pasteur! All about Sherman and nothing about the men who gave their lives to conquer the yellow fever germ in Cuba!" \*

We must adhere to any workable plan—certainly we can adhere to the idea—of a world government, and patiently help really support for a real start in that direction, in the confidence that He who has led the Church and mankind in its past spiritual achievements is the God who goes before in this gigantic undertaking.

"Can any one doubt that God wills that we should cleanse this world of war? Then why not trust God to find the implement wherewith to rid the planet of this loathsome thing? We shall never abolish war by gradual improvement and the slow processes of redemption of human nature. Dueling was not abolished by converting duelists. Men still insult and impugn one another's honor, but they don't fight duels. Dueling was abolished by a fiat of the Christian conscience. If we wait to abolish war until all men love one another, we shall wait until the judgment day. Some generation has got to stop the thing short. Why not ours?"

This chapter was finished on Christmas Day, 1923, and from our heart rises the prayer and hope that Jesus Christ, King of King and Lord of Lords, may lead the world into ordered, righteous, permanent peace.

\* Address at Lake Mohonk, when the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order was organized, May, 1922.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE COUNTRY CHURCH AND CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

THE pastor of the Country Church has already been given considerable attention in two former chapters, and officers of the Church have been discussed at some length. These and other leaders for the work of the Church, and for community leadership as well, deserve special attention, for the finding, inspiring, and training of rural leaders is doubtless the most important aspect of the entire country-life movement.

Everyone who has given the matter any attention is convinced that in the history of American Christianity the Country Church has furnished the great majority of leaders of all sorts of service—ministers and missionaries, philanthropists and special workers, outstanding public servants of many descriptions. However, this ought not to be cited as a justification for unanalyzed missionary expenditures on denominational work in over-churched villages and country communities, nor should it be made a matter of too much boasting. It is merely the citation of a fact. It is a fact in large part explained by the very obvious other fact that many more people have been reared in the country than in the city, until our own generation. It is also because the denominations in which the Country Church has furnished the majority of leadership, have been the distinctively rural or small-town denominations in American life.

It now remains for the Country Church to continue to raise up its full share of leaders for the work of civilization, whether the leadership is to be given to work in city or country, at home or abroad. It has been and should continue to be the glory of the Country Church to supply the world with many of its best leaders, and to sacrifice vicariously, for the sake of the kingdom of God, those who feel called away to service in some other place than their native community. To this, careful attention must be given and in every Church the promising young men and women should be encouraged to enlist and to prepare themselves for such service, and at such places as their capacities, aptitudes, and tastes may fit them to serve.

The problem of leadership for the Country Church in its own community is perennial, and at this particular time seems to be unusually difficult because of factors operating which have been touched upon all through this discussion, chief of which are the apparently greater opportunities and the assuredly greater material rewards of service in larger communities. The Country Churches will need to find and inspire, and co-operate in the training of, most of their own leaders and workers; for while a few who will prefer to render service in the country are born and reared in the city, any large number of leaders from that source can hardly be expected.

In the Report of the Commission on Country Life appointed by President Roosevelt, under the head of general corrective forces that should be set in motion to meet the ascertained defects of country life, emphasis is laid on personal ideals and local leadership. This emphasis holds good in any corrective effort with respect

to the defects and needs of the Country Church. Nearly everything depends on questions of personality and the securing, through personal influence, of free response to higher ideals of life and service. Hence the right kind of leadership cannot be overemphasized.

Leaders in a sense are born, not made. Natural leadership is found in certain persons, and no amount of formal training will develop a leader out of other types. Anyone who has had experience in dealing with Academy and College students knows perfectly well that there is a type of student who is able to do excellent class work and secure good grades, but who shrinks back from all responsibility for leadership, particularly such as involves conflict of personalities. Others with less disciplined mind and purpose seem to have natural adaptation for taking the initiative and for furnishing the ideas and plans for others to follow. Still others combine elements of disciplined strength and native ability to lead. There are no infallible instrumentalities which will disclose the successful leader before the event. Yet they must be discovered and given a training that must, in the necessities of the case, be quite conventional and which will often fail to meet the real need of the particular person.

The moral traits of leadership which are indispensable are initiative, resourcefulness, loyalty, fairness, tact, and sympathy. These are in the realm of spiritual values and can seldom be achieved unless found in germ in the personality, or made a part of the personality by spiritual renewal. Enduring leadership requires a trait sometimes called "stick-to-it-iveness." That is, one must be a thoroughbred, and a thoroughbred has been defined as "a horse that will stay in the race although

his hide is being taken off in chunks." Leadership requires enduring courage and patience.

Capacity to surmount difficulties, in the conviction that the only difference between the difficult and the impossible is that the impossible may take more time, must be found in a real leader. One sometimes despairs of the Country Church when one learns of the large number of pastors and workers who seem already whipped, and who are only waiting the time to be transferred to some other field, or who have tamely succumbed to some difficult situation. The problem of morale in all Church work, especially that of the Country Church, is closely bound up with this problem of leadership. Take the illustration of the Prophet Jonah. He was called to one of the biggest pieces of service which up to his time God had asked of any man. It was to discover in his own person, and make a part of his nation's consciousness; the new and somewhat startling idea that God is Immanent in the affairs of all peoples and nations, and that one cannot run away from God. He became peeved because the method of getting at it which he wanted to follow was not the one which God had in mind. Hence the lesson of the fish experience. Some one has suggested that one of the lessons to be learned from his experience is "not to be down in the mouth because of difficulties, because Jonah in the end came out all right."

All men who have native leadership need careful discipline in methods of using it, or their very gift will be their undoing. They will be tempted in the actual situations into which they come to do the things themselves and consume too much of their energies. A Church or a community can only develop properly when

the leader really leads, and when the following is encouraged to use its own resources of energy and craftsmanship.

In all types of Churches, but probably more frequently in Country Churches, persons aspire to leadership, or are elected to positions requiring leadership, who have some gifts and abilities but not true leadership ability. And the last state of that Church is worse than the first. Often violent contentions among ambitious persons having the will but not the disposition and qualities required to lead tend to disrupt organizations and to discourage milder-tempered persons who might be developed into true leaders. All these facts of general experience must be kept in mind in trying to meet the problem of leadership.

Personal advertising and notoriety-seeking are vices of pseudo-leaders and a constant temptation to all genuine leaders. Ministers who have been given the opportunity of outstanding public service frequently fall victims to this temptation and soon wear out their influence with many of those whose support is essential to the continued success of the undertaking. Then, too, leaders who start well, fail to furnish new ideas for emergencies, or for changed conditions and needs. Automatically they cease to be leaders.

All the foregoing has been written perhaps with no better purpose than to keep constantly in mind the great difficulties in the way of securing, retaining, and fully developing competent leadership for any kind of enterprise that rests upon human nature and capacity.

Persons differ so greatly in inherited capacity and in the presence or absence of certain instincts and inborn tendencies that it is often necessary to select carefully,

for a particular situation or task, the personnel to lead in that task. Certain general considerations, however, apply to the problem of finding suitable leadership in pastors and workers of all sorts for country communities and churches, in the light of the present needs. Some of these considerations would seem to hold for all time and all types of communities.

In addition to those indispensable spiritual qualities mentioned above, a leader for our times should be a happy blend, in attitude and point of view, of the conservative and the liberal. A reactionary conservative who thinks entirely in terms of methods in vogue in former days, and who opposes change because it is change, and who does not believe in progress, can easily become both obscurantist and obstructionist; and the greater his ability, the more likely he is to gum up the entire enterprise, where living, dynamic ideas and personalities must be dealt with and utilized.

A conservatism that is fearful of personal fortunes thus manifests too little faith in God and his goings in the world, and this sort of conservatism may vitiate leadership. It has been alleged that certain general workers and those having administrative positions, too often manifest this faulty type of conservatism.

But of true conservatism we cannot have too much. "Ye are the salt of the earth." Ye are to conserve, even by new and improved methods, the eternally valuable in human life and institutions. Some principles are established and to decry or disparage them seems the part of senseless radicalism.

The radical only views the future, and the means of attaining it, as conforming to his own will. He too often has blind confidence in some cure-all or panacea,

even his own particular brand. Needless to say that this temper of mind and approach vitiates leadership in a world where all kinds of minds and all degrees of intelligence must be dealt with and led into assured and tested progress. The ancient prophet had the balance between conservatism and liberalism about right in the wonderful statement with which the Old Testament closes: "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children [liberalism], and the heart of the children to their fathers [conservatism], lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." Progress results from a fine balancing of effort between the conservative fathers and the progressive children.

The immediately foregoing has applied to methods of work particularly. It might apply equally well to modes of thinking; for if history teaches any one thing, it is that there is more light to break out of God's word continually, and that kindness and good will and a spirit of coöperation are of the essence of Godly character. *The leader must go forward with God.*

A leader, whether natively endowed or one who has disciplined his personality, must depend on intelligence to guide him in the realm where he purposes to lead. It is therefore necessary to give attention to what has ordinarily been called training of leaders, but which might better be termed the education and culture of leaders. *Power belongs to those who have learned, and responsibility flows to those who know how.*

Those who are chosen or who aspire to leadership should be broadly trained, so as to be well grounded in general principles and have proper perspective. Perspective in life is as important as intensive ability, for many abortive efforts are constantly being put forth

which a broader general knowledge of life and life's problems would enable the leader to avoid. Into every community henceforth will come, or there will return, college graduates in increasing numbers. The minister and the Church leaders will have opportunity of placing and using these fine young men and women, or of losing them to religious work. The home Church atmosphere will have become stale and unattractive compared to the one to which for the past few years they have become accustomed. Differences in viewpoint will be accentuated unless the pastor, particularly, is hospitable in his attitude toward them. If these young people return to the stifling air of conventionality, where intolerance of ideas now become very familiar to them is characteristic of the Church leadership, personal tragedies of serious concern to the kingdom of God will be enacted. Perhaps herein lies the explanation of the fact that so many graduates of our colleges and universities, when they return to their homes, or take up work in some rural or semi-rural community, have only a nominal connection with their Churches.

Says D. W. C. Bitting in his book, "The Teaching Pastor":

Let the minister give this message to his people: "You men and women put your hands into your pockets four times partly or wholly for educational purposes. First, you pay taxes, part of which goes to support a State scheme of education which begins with the kindergarten and ends with the State university. A second time you contribute to found, support, and endow denominational schools. You do well, for they have an important function in the religious life of young people. The plastic, adolescent period of life is concurrent with the beginning of a college career, and this is the time when re-



ligious impressions' can be implanted indelibly. State schools do not dare to attempt evangelistic or religious efforts. A third time you put your hands in your pockets to send your sons and your daughters to these State or denominational schools which you by taxes and gifts have founded and are supporting. It costs you something to put into the minds of your children the things for which education stands. You dare not deny them the advantages which a college career gives except at the expense of their future. Will you a fourth time put your hands in your pockets to pay for the salary of an uneducated, incompetent minister who will denounce as godless the very schools which your taxes and gifts have established, and which you have patronized at such heavy expense, and compel your cultured sons and daughters upon their return from college either to stay away from church if they wish to maintain their intellectual self-respect, or if they attend from a sense of filial obligation, to leave their intellectual self-respect with their umbrellas in the corridor?"

The minister will want to bring help and leadership to the very flower of his people, the educated adults, and the cultured young people and be able to disclose to them the realities found in the Bible in such a way as to integrate the truth with the culture of these young people.

Those who have not had the advantages and privileges of education will even more need the sympathetic, intelligent leadership that will in part at least make amends for this shortage. Many business men and farmer folk to whom has been denied the advantages of higher education will appreciate the gracious service of a pastor who can gather them into classes on Sundays or week-nights and expound some course in Biblical truth as it relates to the life of to-day. It is past question, our times require that the pastor and at least some of the Church leaders be given opportunity for the

kind of training and culture which will enable them to lead the Church and community aright.

The task of furnishing this opportunity and of keeping pastors and Church leaders abreast of current methods and of stimulating them to development of otherwise only partly trained abilities is a coöperative one. It is the work of the General Boards, the Theological Seminaries, and the Colleges.

Much has been done and is being done to afford the fullest opportunity for this additional training, both for pastors and workers who have had little or no previous college or seminary work, and also for those who have. In addition to various institutes and schools of methods conducted by Sunday School and Mission Boards, the Summer Assemblies and Encampments have done excellent work. But much of this work has been spasmodic and in many cases has failed to reach those who could profit most by it. Indeed some who have places of responsibility and leadership, even pastors and Sunday school superintendents, neglect to avail themselves of these opportunities, and that too when it is obvious that new ideas and suggestions make for greater efficiency on the part of those who do avail themselves of the opportunities provided.

In recent years new types of Summer Schools for Pastors and Christian Workers are being provided, particularly for supplementing the regular and established seminaries and training schools to which only a relatively small number can go during the school year. In some States the State University has put its buildings and part of its faculty at the disposal of the Boards and officials of coöperating denominations to give a short course to such ministers and workers as the Boards

## 150 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

would be able to have attend. The University of Wisconsin, the University of Ohio, the University of Washington are examples. The following is a typical schedule of courses in one of these summer schools held at a State University, which was two weeks in length and which was taught by men of the University faculty and Church leaders:

Rural Sociology (lectures and textbook).

Rural Church Methods (lectures and conference).

Home and Community Problems.

Special course for pastors' wives.

Bible course.

Supervision of recreation and training in play leadership.

Special evening lectures on current world problems.

The following is the schedule of a Summer School of Theology held for two weeks at a Seminary, where buildings and Faculty was provided by the Seminary Trustees and the denominational Home Mission Board. It included both city and country pastors and workers and brought the leaders of these two areas into sympathetic contact:

The New Rural Community (a course in Rural Sociology by a specialist).

The Foreigner (a course on the immigrant by a city missionary).

Preaching Christian Truth (a course in Theology by a Seminary Professor).

The Church as an Educator (by the Secretary of the Religious Education Society).

Rural Church Methods (by a Home Mission Secretary).

Preaching and Worship (by a Seminary Professor).

The Church and Industry (by a College Professor of Sociology).

Filling Empty Pews (by a successful pastor).

The Hebrew Prophets (by a Seminary President).

Play and Training in Recreation Supervision.

The following is a typical schedule of a Summer School for Pastors and Christian Workers held for two weeks with a denominational college where the Home Mission Board and the Conference coöperated to provide a faculty of specialists and to bring up practically all the pastors of the Conference and a few of the Church workers. It is typical of a large number of similar schools, and bids fair to be the best solution of the problem of training for ministers and leaders, to carry out the suggestions and program of such a book as this:

Biblical Background for Our Rural Message.

Rural Evangelism.

Organization and Administration of the Sunday School.

The Rural Church and the Development of Community Life.

Labor's Challenge to the Social Order.

Rural Church Programs and Methods.

Women's Work in the Rural Church.

Biblical Materials for Present-Day Preaching.

The Church and Economic Welfare.

Recreation and Directed Play.

Platform addresses dealing with Biblical and current questions.

A specified amount of text-book and of written work is required. Upon the completion of any course a certificate for the course is issued. A student may take

only two courses for credit and may visit (or audit) at least one other course. The schools are so arranged that in four summers a student may complete eight courses, some of which are required and some of which are elective, together with at least four audit (visitor) courses, and receive a diploma as a Rural Leader or City Leader according as he has completed the required courses for rural or city leadership.

The atmosphere and fellowship of a college surround these schools and furnish color and background for truly educational and culture courses, and there are thus combined that emphasis upon vocational training and the broadening influences so much needed by the leader of Church life.

It remains for the pastor to secure the attendance at these schools of one or more members of his Church to take such courses as will meet their need, and thus become his supporters in carrying out a balanced and aggressive community program. If all pastors and a goodly number of Church workers are led to avail themselves of such schools, the problem of leadership for the Country Church will have been largely solved.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE APPROACH TO THE COUNTRY LIFE PROBLEM

ALL study of institutions and social mechanisms is, or should be, in response to the instinct to know and to construct. The relation of the institution or social arrangement to human life and well-being can be sought in a study of its origin, development, and outworkings.

The reason for studying institutions and ways of collective action in the country can have no higher support than that we want to understand this area or section of our civilization in order to control the factors and conditions found to be operating there, in the interest of human welfare.

The Country Life Problem in America has been stated as "that of developing and maintaining on our farms a people contented and happy, living in harmony with our best American ideals." It has also been stated as "that of maintaining on our soil a population which shall not only supply the nation with its food and raw materials for industry, but also measure up to the level of our American civilization and standard of living, individual and social—a standard which makes provision for the development of the body, mind, and spirit."

This latter definition concerns publicists and statesmen principally, but the goal it sets forth can be accomplished only by the sympathetic and intelligent coöperation of all good citizens under the lead of those of great

est understanding, appreciation, and privilege. It also presents the wider aspects of the problem as it recognizes the relation of those who live on the land to other parts of the national population.

"Best American ideals," in the first definition, may seem to be a rather vague expression; but it certainly includes the idea of personal character, harmonious and mutually helpful social relationships, a high measure of happiness and satisfaction of primary human needs, and a quality of life characterized by freedom of expression and movement, and voluntary coöperation of individuals and communities in social progress.

Multitudes are becoming interested in the Country Life Problem as a discipline of intelligence and sympathy, and want to know how to lay hold and help secure a reasonable answer to the problem. How shall they prepare mind and sympathies to understand and to participate helpfully? What shall be the approach of a person or group or organization where the purpose is to get at the heart of the problem?

The aim is to develop profound appreciations, scientific knowledge and understanding, and mastery of sound principles and methods of constructive helpfulness.

The analysis of an adequate approach will certainly show the necessity for what may be called the Artistic and Literary Approach, the Scientific Approach, and the Constructive Approach.\*

1. *The Artistic and Literary Approach*.—This is for the purpose of discovering, releasing, and developing rural-mindedness and sympathy. Without this approach, appreciation and spiritual understanding are

\* Cf. "Rural Life," by C. J. Galpin, Chapter I.

likely to be lacking. Of course, one may be making or renewing this qualitative study of Country Life; may be attempting to see the problem through the eyes of artist or seer from time to time, even in a period during which the mind and analytical faculties are coldly and dispassionately seeking to dissect rural social conditions and structures, and to see how they came to be. *But without appreciation, which is qualitative, scant progress can be made in the understanding of human social arrangements.* The reason some scientists can understand so little the Church and the activities of religion is to be attributed to the lack of sympathy and appreciation.

To look into the meaning of the picture, "The Angelus," and see through the eyes of the artist the idea of the union of Work and Worship, as man and woman worker in the harvest bow reverently when the Angelus sounds, is to sense the way in which the fundamental life of the tiller of the soil has expressed itself in all ages. To study the artist's and poet's "Man with the Hoe" is to see, with one revelation, the lingering injustice which society has done the tiller of the soil who battles with nature to secure bread for his fellow men.

To learn to love a beautiful landscape or nature scene, and to have joy in things that grow, is to come close to the inwardness of the Country Life Problem.

So often, having eyes to see we see not, or ears to hear we hear not. The artistic approach is to help open our eyes that we may see, and to make less dull our powers of appreciation, that we may sense and understand.

It is remarkable how much of a Country Life book the Bible is. Its writers are constantly describing rural scenes, or giving rural word pictures, to illustrate and



lighten up the truth they are presenting. In the one ancient prophet Hosea, who was a born countryman, we find frequent word pictures, only understood by those of rural experience or powers of appreciation. "Israel slideth back like a backsliding heifer" (Hos. iv. 16) is a word picture peculiar to rural folk and is a harmonious and adequate expression of one phase of human nature. The writer wanted us to *see* Israel's stubbornness and folly in resisting God's leadership given through his prophets, and in this word picture we see it fully set forth.

Really the Bible is a book of Country Life. Yet it is a book of all life and for everyone, and in the New Testament the perfect social order is described as a city state. Hence the Bible by implication teaches a harmonious relation between city and outlying country regions.

Hebrew idealism was nurtured in the open country. The early Hebrew community was a rural community. Early Hebrew civilization centers around rural heroes. Herdsmen and farmers found God and founded God's kingdom on earth. Abraham pioneered with his herds and possessions. Jacob the agriculturist supplanted Esau the hunter. The husbandman with his thrift and regular habits caused the earth to yield her increase and took possession of the land, replacing the irregular, spasmodic, unthrifty hunter.

Moses was the emancipator of shepherds who had been enslaved by industrialists. A nation of land-owning peasants came into being and the finest virtues which Old Testament religion extols were developed in the simple agricultural economy of the Land of Hearts' Desire—the Promised Land.

To one who would make the literary approach to the Country Life Problem, lanes of vista and windows of vision are open. George Macdonald in his "Annals of a Quiet Neighborhood" has lifted out the eternal significance of life lived in rural surroundings, and has helped us look for and see the eternal in the simple and commonplace. Incidentally, it is a splendid book on Rural Pastoral Theory and Practice. Another of his books, "The Seaboard Parish," is more of the same, only the setting has to do with even more elemental natural activities of fisher folk as well as farmers.

David Grayson's "The Friendly Road" takes us sympathetically through lanes and highways where people of undiscovered but discoverable interest may be found. It establishes in us a mood, a friendly feeling of true neighborliness, which unlocks many a secret in out-of-the-way lives. The country is the place for real neighborliness. The word "neighbor" is from two Dutch words, meaning nigh-boor or next farmer.

"Jess; or, Bits of a Wayside Gospel" is the title of a little book by Jenkin Lloyd Jones in which he sets forth what he learned on vacation ramblings on horseback through newly settled sections of Wisconsin. Theodore Roosevelt in his "Winning of the West" has gathered some of the materials which will go into the great epic of the founding of an agricultural kingdom in the heart of the new world. L. H. Bailey has written "The Holy Earth," and helps us to see every bush aflame with God and every land a Land of Promise, and the tiller of the soil as a worker together with God.

In more somber and pessimistic mood Hamlin Garland has written "A Son of the Middle Border." He pictures in symbol the trek from East to West and the

heartbreak of the woman who severs community ties to follow on to the receding West, once and again, and yet again, a husband who finds it hard to root himself in permanence in any one neighborhood. It is the sad side of "The Price of the Prairie." It is the vicarious element in a nation's conquest of virgin lands and the setting up of civilization. Other men (and women) labored and we have entered into their labors.

Time forbids that we should more than mention "Vandermark's Folly," "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," "Main Street," "Near to Nature's Heart," "Fear God in Your Own Village," and other books of less or more merit. But we must mention here once again what is doubtless destined to be a classic of Country Life, "The Life of John Frederick Oberlin," by A. F. Beard. It tells the complete story of the mystic values and spiritual resources in an out-of-the-way mountain community of farmer folk waiting the magic touch of the wand of a sympathetic personality. It is a story of personal character-forming, and community-building. We have noticed it before in the discussion of the Country Minister.

2. *The Scientific Approach.*—A science observes, describes, classifies, and seeks to explain reality. It must of course segregate the area of its inquiry and then explore the facts in that field and seek to know them in their relations and significance. There is, then, a scientific approach to the many and varied problems arising in connection with Country Life, and a well-ordered body of knowledge is accumulating and is being made available for specific aspects and problems, with a varying degree of completeness and satisfactoriness.

The Department of Agriculture has for many years

been studying and publishing bulletins and other forms of information. Soil surveys and analysis, studies of plant and animal diseases, of crop condition and marketing problems, are only samples of the varied scientific data made available for those engaged in agriculture or closely allied to it.

This Department of the Federal Government, first formed in 1889, has constantly increased the scope and nature of its activities until now its research and educational work is hastening the process of putting Country Life on a truly scientific basis.

Among its Bureaus and forms of activity are : (a) The Weather Bureau, (b) Bureau of Animal Industry, (c) Bureau of Plant Industry, (d) Bureau of Chemistry, (e) Bureau of Soils, (f) Bureau of Entomology, (g) Bureau of Biological Survey, (h) Bureau of Crop Estimates.

The Department is now expanding its work to include studies in home life and living conditions in the country as well as the various economic phases of country life.

Several works on rural economics and many publications on the technical side of agriculture have long been available, and the field is being studied by a multitude of scientists, students both of principles and methods. For one who desires only a general but accurate acquaintance with rural economics, T. N. Carver's "Introduction to Rural Economics" will serve as a first handbook of knowledge.

Rural Sociology as a separate branch of sociological inquiry is more recent. Here we have a few general works and many treatments of special subjects. "Rural Sociology," by J. M. Gillette, is a general treatise

describing the nature of rural society with its distinctive characteristics. The development of Country Life and institutions with a description of different types of communities found in the country is presented. Economic conditions and problems are presented with a fullness which determines the emphasis of the author to have been at this point.

"Introduction to Rural Sociology," by Paul L. Vogt, gives a more human emphasis, although the physical and economic basis of rural life is given adequate treatment. The author seems in this book to be more intent upon discussing those relationships which are more distinctly social and in which human welfare is involved. Questions of land tenure and its bearing on home and family and Church life—on morals and education; questions of health, of morality, of satisfying social life, of the school and Church—loom large and are subjected to scientific analysis.

In following the development of scientific study of the field of Country Life we come upon another book stressing the human aspects of Country Life. "Rural Life," by C. J. Galpin, is frankly written to let the people who live on the land appear as they are and come to be known in both their subjective and objective aspects. "The Psychology of Farm Life," "Social Rôle of the Housewife," "The Social Rôle of the Child," and "Farmers' Churches" are some of the chapter headings. In and through the entire book the author is seeking the oft-repeating rural social unit—the fairly well integrated neighborhood or community which is typical of thousands of the "places where country people live."

It might be well at this juncture to note that a scientific study of the community is accompanying or is a

part of the study of Country Life. Such a book as "The Community," by E. C. Lindeman, is typical of the new interest and emphasis, and such studies will give valuable aid in the understanding of complicated human situations.

The whole range of human and near-human problems has been studied by individuals and research groups with increasing zest since the publication of the Report of the Roosevelt Country Life Commission in 1908. The Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., under the lead of Dr. Warren H. Wilson, conducted inquiries in several counties in different parts of the country to ascertain the relation between physical, economic, social, and religious conditions, and these studies have been the basis of widespread publicity and educational campaigns. The thesis is very well established as to the close, and in many cases the causal relation between economic conditions and the welfare institutions of the country communities.

Since the Interchurch World Movement was discontinued, many of the partial surveys of rural conditions begun by that organization have been carried to completion by the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys, a group whose work has recently been merged into the work of the Institute of Social and Religious Research of New York. The work of this research group, the Town and Country Church section of which has been led by Dr. E. de S. Brunner and Dr. H. N. Morse, has been and will be of immense value in discovering to statesmen, publicists, and Church leaders the real situation, socially, morally, and religiously, in rural America.

The scientific interest and study of rural America

has proceeded, somewhat brokenly and unevenly to be sure, from survey of physical and soil conditions to intense studies of human institutions and relationships in the country. Beginning with facts that have to do with growing crops and animals, passing to facts that have to do with business, homes, human life, and satisfactions, has been the course of scientific study of Country Life.

Many problems or groups of problems still remain to be studied. There is the problem of the *incomplete economic life* of the country. The farmer's income the country over is small. The farmer's own labor and that of his family must in most cases be added to a fairly high order of managerial ability in order to piece out a living. Hence problems of management, labor supply, division of labor—in short, all the problems of industrial engineering—are in chaotic condition, with respect to farming, in practically the entire country.

Age-old problems of land tenure are still unsettled and are as vexing now as they ever have been.

Problems of coöperation and economic organization have only been touched, not solved. What to do and how to do it to make the farmer a part of a *completed industry* are vexing questions. Since the farmer in most cases only begins the process of production, leaving many aspects of primary and most of secondary production (manufacturing and marketing) to others, he is unable to follow through and control the productive process and exact a fair share of the result in the finished product. Experiment and study will continue in various forms of organization, coöperation, marketing, and financing of farm enterprises, in order to understand scientifically the most efficient and humanly satis-

lying way of producing food, and raw materials for industry.

The problem of inadequate school facilities still faces the country dweller. A recent survey of a Northwestern State which is almost entirely agricultural shows that the average education of the citizens does not go beyond the fifth grade. Such a population is manifestly unable to understand the use of scientific knowledge and methods and is compelled to live a life far below par as compared to what may be termed the American standard of Living. The schools are often poor and mean and unattractive, and too often taught by poorly prepared teachers who turn the thought of pupils away from the country and create an unrest and an ambition for the more garish city life.

These and many other problems are receiving scientific study, and great progress in understanding Country Life is thus being made.

3. *The Constructive Approach.*—All profound personal and detached scientific interest in any field of reality has its ultimate meaning in programs of control and amendment. The constructive approach to the Country Life Problem is the approach of practical methods of helpfulness and improvement.

Very much of the improvement of social conditions will depend of course upon resident forces and leadership in localities. But all communities are now bound up with larger social units; and influences which are State- and nation-wide—indeed, not infrequently world-wide—play upon the most isolated countryside.

For this reason, therefore, any one who wants to understand and coöperate most effectively with *the* Country Life Movement to help bring about "better



business, better homes, and better living" in the country, will either begin or culminate in the order of his studies, with a study of the International Institute of Agriculture. The story of the organization and activities of this Institute will be found in the Life of David Lubin, its founder. It is now recognized as a part of the program of international coöperation.

From the beginning of the Department of Agriculture the outlook has been toward the coöperation of the Federal Government with the States in promoting better methods of farming. Demonstrations have been conducted by the various schools and foundations, supported by public or private funds, in order to bring practical methods of improvement of agriculture to the attention of the farmer.

The Farm Bureau and the County Agent are constructive attempts to lend aid and assistance where it will be appreciated, and then even go further, and attempt to create the attitude of appreciation and coöperation.

In the realm of social, educational, and religious institutions also, constructive attempts are being made "to strengthen what remains," and to find a way out in many cases.

Lifting oneself or one's community by one's own bootstraps is about as feasible in the realm of practical programs as it is in philosophical thinking. It just isn't done. This does not mean that the coöperation and release of resident forces is not the place of major emphasis—it is. You cannot help people very much who cannot or will not help themselves. But the fact that we have entire counties where backwardness and low-grade life is the rule is a challenge to the entire body of

society to lend helpful, health-giving aid to its diseased members. The entire Home Mission enterprise, which was a leavening of the nation through *the enlistment of social surpluses in behalf of social deficits*, is a standing challenge to the strong communities now to help bear the burden of the weak.

National programs of coöperation in road-building and State funds and bond issues to lessen isolation by the construction of a true system of highways are moves in the right direction.

School funds should be administered in State-wide fashion, with supplementing of local resources where necessary to meet local needs, according to approved methods which do not impoverish and stifle, but which stimulate and lead out resident powers.

Church boards and denominational agencies may well study and seek to administer the work of the Town and Country Church with a view to the equalizing of opportunity and with a constructive policy of coöperation.

#### SUGGESTED READING COURSE

To any one who wants to understand the Country Life Movement one door of entrance stands open. Read at least one book a month. Have the best of the books put in the nearest public library for oneself and others to read. The following is a suggested reading course:

"Report of the Commission on Country Life." Sturgis and Walton Company, New York.

"The Challenge of the Country," G. W. Fiske.

"Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science," March, 1912.

"The Church and Country Life," edited by Paul L. Vogt. Missionary Education Movement, New York.



## 166 A NEW DAY FOR THE COUNTRY CHURCH

"Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches," Edward de S. Brunner. George H. Doran Company, New York.

"Rural Denmark and Its Lessons," H. Rider Haggard, Longmans, Green & Company.

"The Rural Church Serving the Community," Edwin L. Earp. The Abingdon Press, New York.

"The Sunday School at Work in Town and Country," M. W. Brabham. George H. Doran Company, New York.

One or more of the volumes of the publications of the Institute of Social and Religious Research—*e. g.*, "The Social Survey in Town and Country Areas," "The Town and Country Church in the United States," "Church Life in the Rural South"—all published by George H. Doran Company, New York.

"The Country Town," W. L. Anderson. Doubleday, Page & Company.

"Solving the Country Church Problem," Garland A. Bricker. Methodist Book Concern, New York.

"Country Life and the Country School," Mabel Carney. Rowe, Peterson & Company.

"The American Rural School," H. W. Foght. The Macmillan Company, New York.

"The Little Town," H. P. Douglas. The Macmillan Company, New York.

"The Community," E. C. Lindeman. The Association Press, New York.

"Churches of Distinction in Town and Country," E. de S. Brunner. George H. Doran Company.

When the insights and inspirations contained in the foregoing books on Country Life have become the possession of the leaders of Country Churches, a new day will have dawned for the Country Church.

